

Havana's Policy in Africa, 1959-76: New Evidence from Cuban Archives

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The dearth of documents and historical context has hampered rigorous analysis of Cuba's intervention in Angola in 1975. Despite the interest scholars have shown in the episode, the lack of Cuban documents and the closed nature of Cuban society have prevented them from being able to accurately describe Cuba's actions. I have gone to Havana six times, for a total of six months, since 1993 to research Cuban policy toward Africa, and I have gained access to the archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (CC CPC), the *Instituto de Historia de Cuba*, the *Centro de Información de la Defensa de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, and the *Ministerio para la Inversión Extranjera y la Colaboración Económica*. Armed with documents from these closed and never before used archives, supplemented with interviews, a close reading of the press, and U.S. documents, I can shed new light on the Angola affair.

The new documents clarify the evolution of Cuba's involvement in Angola and answer the critical question of whether the Cubans sent troops before or after the South African intervention. They also address the vexing question of Havana's motivation, particularly whether or not it was acting as a Soviet proxy. They document Cuba's longstanding relationship with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and they place the Angolan crisis in the broad context of Cuban policy toward Africa. From 1959 to 1974 the Cubans intervened in Algeria, Congo Leopoldville, Congo Brazzaville and Guinea-Bissau. More Cubans fought in Africa during these years than in Latin America, and Cuban policy was far more successful in the former than in the latter. The story of these fifteen years challenges the image of Cuban foreign policy—cyni-

cal ploys of a client state—that prevails in the United States. Yet it has attracted virtually no attention. It is a significant lacuna. As a Cuban official told me, “Cuba's intervention in Angola cannot be understood without looking at our past.”²

Whereas those who publish in the *Bulletin* generally use archives that have been opened, the Cuban archives I have used are still closed. This requires, then, an explanation of my *modus operandi*.

There was no established declassification process in Cuba when I began my research. Mindful of the fact that the documents I cited would not be readily accessible to my readers, I decided that I would never use a document unless I was given a photocopy of the original. I badgered Cuban officials relentlessly, arguing that in the United States their word has no credibility, that their testimonies are only valid if supported by documents, and that while one document would suffice to criticize Cuba, five would be necessary to say anything positive. Jorge Risquet, a member of the Central Committee, understood. I owe a great debt to his intelligence and sensitivity. We have come a long way since the day in 1994 when I asked him for all the reports written by the Chief of the Cuban Military Mission in Angola between August and October 1975 only to be told, “You aren't writing his biography. One will be enough.” Two years later, I received all the others. The Cubans established a procedure of which I could only approve: any document they expected to be declassified they allowed me to read in its entirety, whether in Risquet's office or in the archives themselves. Then the waiting would begin. It could take less than a hour or more than a year. As I write, there are several hundred pages of documents that I have been allowed to read but have not yet been given.

About 80 of the more than 3,000 pages of documents that I have received were sanitized after I had read them.

Frequently the edited lines contained the remarks of a foreign leader criticizing his own political allies; thus, to explain why half a page had been sanitized [Doc. 5], Risquet wrote, “the conversation that followed was about internal MPLA matters that [Angolan President Agostinho] Neto discussed with [Cuban official Díaz] Argüelles. It would be unethical to make them public.”³ In the case of three intelligence documents, the sanitized paragraphs would have revealed sources. In other cases the lines (or words) sanitized included comments about African or Asian countries that, the censors believed, would unnecessarily complicate Cuba's foreign relations.

I have also interviewed 63 Cuban protagonists, many of them repeatedly and in relaxed settings. While interviews without documents would be of little use, interviews with documents can be extremely helpful. Furthermore, many of the interviewees gave me letters and journals from their own personal collections, and they alerted me to documents in the government archives, which made it possible to be very specific in my requests to Risquet. The Cuban authorities were well aware of my freewheeling interviews and to the best of my knowledge they did nothing to hinder me. Currently I am complementing my research in Cuba with research in the United States, Europe (particularly Moscow, Berlin, and Lisbon), and, of course, Africa.

Cuba's pre-1975 Africa policy can be divided into three major phases: pre-1964, when the focus was Algeria; 1964-66, when Cuba's attention was suddenly riveted by sub-Saharan Africa—a heady time characterized by Che Guevara's three-month trip through the continent and the dispatch of Cuban columns to Zaire and Congo Brazzaville; and post-1966, a period of growing maturity, highlighted by the long and successful Cuban involvement in Guinea-Bissau (1966-74). Before

discussing Cuba's role in Angola in 1975-76, I will briefly touch on each of these phases.

Cuban leaders saw similarities between the Algerian revolution against French rule and their own struggle against both Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista and the United States. In December 1961, a Cuban ship unloaded a cargo of weapons at Casablanca for the Algerian rebels. It returned to Havana with 76 wounded Algerian fighters and 20 children from refugee camps.⁴

The aid continued after Algeria gained its independence. In May 1963, a 55-person Cuban medical mission arrived in Algeria. And, as would be the case for all the missions that followed (until 1978), the aid was free. "It was like a beggar offering his help, but we knew that the Algerian people needed it even more than we did, and that they deserved it," said the then-Minister of Public Health, José Ramón Machado Ventura.⁵ And in October 1963, when Algeria was threatened by Morocco, the Cubans rushed a special force of 686 men with heavy weapons to the Algerians' aid, even though Morocco had just signed a contract to buy one million tons of Cuban sugar for \$184 million, a considerable amount of hard currency at a time when the United States was trying to cripple Cuba's economy.

Cuba's interest in sub-Saharan Africa quickened in late 1964. This was the moment of the great illusion, when the Cubans, and many others, believed that revolution beckoned in Africa. Guerrillas were fighting the Portuguese in Angola; armed struggle was accelerating in Portuguese Guinea and beginning in Mozambique. In Congo Brazzaville, a new government was loudly proclaiming its revolutionary sympathies. And, above all, there was Congo Leopoldville (later called Zaire), where armed revolt had been spreading with stunning speed since the spring of 1964, threatening the survival of the corrupt pro-American regime that Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had laboriously put in place. "The struggle has just begun, these are its first flames," wrote the Cuban weekly *Verde Olivo*. "It will, no doubt, be a long struggle, in Angola and Portuguese

Guinea as well, but what matters is that a powerful guerrilla movement has taken hold in the Congo."⁶ (To avoid confusion, Congo Leopoldville will be referred to in this essay as the Congo, and its neighbor as Congo Brazzaville.)

To save the Congolese regime, the Johnson Administration raised an army of more than 1,000 white mercenaries in a major covert operation that was obvious to all but the U.S. press and provoked a wave of revulsion even among African leaders friendly to the United States.⁷ The Cubans saw the conflict as more than an African problem: "Our view was that the situation in the Congo was a problem that concerned all mankind," Che Guevara wrote.⁸

In December 1964, Guevara went to Africa on a three-month trip that signaled Cuba's growing interest in the region. In February 1965 he was in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, which was then, as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency pointed out, "a haven for exiles from the rest of Africa . . . plotting the overthrow of African governments, both black and white."⁹ After a general meeting with the liberation movements [see Doc. 2], Che met separately with each, and three times with the Congolese rebel leaders Laurent Kabila and Gaston Soumialot.¹⁰

"[Kabila] impressed me," wrote Che. "I offered him, on behalf of our government, about thirty instructors and all the weapons we could spare, and he accepted with delight; he urged us to hurry, as did Soumialot, in the course of another conversation. Soumialot also asked that the instructors be black." Cuba had "offered aid on condition that Tanzania approve," Guevara explained. "It did, so we went ahead. The aid was given unconditionally and with no time limit." Che left Dar-es-Salaam with "the joy of having found people ready to fight to the finish. Our next task was to select a group of black Cubans—all volunteers—and send them to help in the struggle in the Congo."¹¹

In April 1965, a Cuban column of some 120 men under Guevara began entering eastern Congo through Tanzania. A few weeks later a second Cuban column under Jorge Risquet arrived in neighboring Congo Brazzaville at the

request of that country's government, which lived "in fear" of an attack by the Congo's mercenaries; the column could also, perhaps, assist Che in the Congo. "It constituted . . . a reserve force for Che's column, which it would join if necessary, at the right time."¹² Overall, 400 Cuban volunteers were in Central Africa in the summer of 1965.

But Central Africa was not ready for revolution. By the time the Cubans arrived in the Congo, the rebels' strength had been broken. The story of Che's column is not one of great battles, but of 120 people thrust into an impossible situation, in a totally alien world, who retained their humanity until the end. Their experience is recorded in several documents: the manuscript that Che wrote in the Cuban embassy in Dar-es-Salaam (and which, he said, would not be published "for a long time"¹³); the journal of his right-hand-man, Víctor Dreke; and the diaries of several of his men. Guevara could only preside over the agony of the rebellion until the rebels' collapse left him no choice but to withdraw in November 1965.

In Congo Brazzaville, meanwhile, Risquet's column saved the host government from a military coup in June 1966 through bluster and diplomacy, without having to shed blood.¹⁴ Then it withdrew, against the wishes of their hosts. Risquet understood, and made Havana understand, that there was no revolution in Congo Brazzaville. "He was able to get us out at the right moment," observes his second-in-command. "He was flexible."¹⁵ Although the Cubans withdrew in 1967, they left "something useful in their wake":¹⁶ the doctors attached to the column conducted the first vaccination campaign in the country against polio,¹⁷ and 254 young Congolese had gone to Cuba to study, all expenses paid.¹⁸

The late 1960s were a period of deepening maturity in Cuba's relationship with Africa. No longer deluded that revolution was around the corner, the Cubans were learning about sub-Saharan Africa. In those years—indeed, through 1974—the main focus of Havana's attention in Africa was Guinea-Bissau, where the rebels of the Partido Africano da Independência da

Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) were fighting for independence from Portugal. The PAIGC was “the most effective of the liberation organizations in the Portuguese African territories,” U.S. reports stressed time and again.¹⁹ At the PAIGC’s request, Cuban military instructors arrived in Guinea-Bissau in 1966, and they remained there through the end of the war in 1974. This was the longest Cuban intervention in Africa before the dispatch of troops to Angola in 1975. It was also the most successful. In the words of Guinea-Bissau’s first president,

we were able to fight and triumph because other countries and people helped us ... with weapons, with medicine, with supplies ... But there is one nation that in addition to material, political and diplomatic support, even sent its children to fight by our side, to shed their blood in our land together with that of the best children of our country.

This great people, this heroic people, we all know that it is the heroic people of Cuba; the Cuba of Fidel Castro; the Cuba of the Sierra Maestra, the Cuba of Moncada ... Cuba sent its best children here so that they could help us in the technical aspects of our war, so that they could help us to wage this great struggle ... against Portuguese colonialism.²⁰

Some 40-50 Cubans fought in Guinea-Bissau each year from 1966 until independence in 1974. They helped in military planning and they were in charge of the artillery. Their contribution was, as President Nino, who had been the senior military commander of the PAIGC, said, “of the utmost importance.”²¹

Just as the only foreigners who fought with the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau were Cubans, so too the only foreign doctors were Cubans (with one brief exception), and there were no native doctors until 1968. From 1966 to 1974 there were, on average, seven Cuban doctors in Guinea Bissau. “They really performed a miracle,” observes Francisca Pereira, a senior PAIGC official. “I am eternally grateful to them: not only did they save lives, but they also put their own lives at risk. They were truly selfless.”²²

The men who went to Algeria,

Zaire, Congo Brazzaville, and Guinea-Bissau were volunteers. They were captivated by the mystique of guerrilla war. “We dreamt of revolution,” one muses. “We wanted to be part of it, to feel that we were fighting for it. We were young, and the children of a revolution.” Fighting abroad, they would defend the revolution at home. “In all those years we believed that at any moment they [the United States] were going to strike us; and for us it was better to wage the war abroad than in our own country.”²³

The volunteers received no public praise in Cuba. They left “knowing that their story would remain a secret.”²⁴ They won neither medals nor material rewards. Once back they could not boast about their deeds, because they were bound to secrecy.

This secrecy notwithstanding, through all these years U.S. officials knew that Cubans were in Africa—in Algeria, then in Zaire, in Congo Brazzaville, and finally in Guinea-Bissau. And yet they paid little attention to it. As Robinson McIlvaine, the U.S. ambassador in Conakry, Guinea, from October 1966 through August 1969, remarked, “The State Department was not particularly concerned with the Cuban presence. It was not a big worry for us.” This complacency, which contrasts starkly with Washington’s reaction to even the rumor of Cuban combatants in Latin America, is explained by the fact that U.S. officials were confident that a handful of Cubans could not be effective in distant, alien African countries. In discussing Communist subversion in Africa, the CIA barely mentioned Cuba.²⁵

This helps explain why the United States was stunned by the Cuban intervention in Angola in 1975. “In the 1960s there was no sense of a Cuban danger in Africa; their intervention in Angola was a real surprise,” observes former State Department official Paul O’Neil.

During my tenure as Director of Southern Africa Office [of the State Department from July 1973 to June 1975] we were aware that there was some Soviet/East European support for the MPLA, but I don’t recall any discussion of a Cuban role before I left. Aside from the Soviet Union, we would discuss the pos-

sible role of East Germany. I don’t recall any concern about a Cuban role. Before I left, when people in the Africa Bureau [of the State Department] talked of the Soviet bloc role in Angola, they thought of the Soviets, the East Germans, not of Cuba. I don’t recall that we knew of Cuba’s ties with the MPLA, but even if we knew it didn’t worry us.²⁶

These ties had begun in 1965, when Che Guevara had met Agostinho Neto, Lucio Lara, and other MPLA leaders in Brazzaville in a “historical encounter,” as Raúl Castro called it.²⁷ “We spoke, we discussed,” related Lara. “We wanted only one thing from the Cubans: instructors. The war was becoming difficult and we were inexperienced ... Guevara promised that he would speak with his Party and his government so that they would send us instructors.”²⁸

Risquet’s column trained MPLA guerrillas in Congo Brazzaville in 1966-67 and several of its members joined the MPLA in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda as advisers, instructors, and combatants.²⁹ There were moments of frustration for the instructors who had learned their trade in the exacting school of Fidel Castro’s Rebel Army and who found themselves in a completely alien culture with a very different concept of discipline, and there were also warm moments of humanity in that inhospitable forest. “I looked at them all,” wrote the Cuban Rafael Moracén after delivering a particularly severe scolding in which he had given vent to all his frustrations, “and I was moved, I felt love for them. . . . They had such dignity that I felt it was worth dying with them if I had to.”³⁰ Bonds were forged that would never be forgotten, and which explain why, ten years later, in late 1975, Moracén pestered Raúl Castro to be allowed to return to Angola. “I am an Angolan,” he pleaded.³¹

In 1966, the MPLA withdrew its forces from Cabinda and opened a new front in eastern Angola along the Zambian border. This meant that there was no reason for the Cubans to remain in the Congo, and they were unable to send instructors to eastern Angola, as the MPLA requested, because of Zambian opposition. Over the next few years, until the end of 1974, relations between

Cuba and the MPLA were friendly but less close, and Cuba's support for the movement was limited to training a handful of MPLA fighters in Cuba and, as the MPLA was convulsed by internal strife, to giving unwavering support to the group around Agostinho Neto.³²

Lack of space precludes an in-depth discussion of the 1975 Cuban intervention in Angola. I will focus instead on two particularly controversial issues: when Cuba sent its military instructors and when it sent its troops. I will also comment briefly on some of the points raised in Odd Arne Westad's article about the Soviet role in Angola in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

The basic outline of the story is well known. Upon the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship on 25 April 1974, there were three rival independence movements in Angola: Agostinho Neto's MPLA, Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). On 15 January 1975, Portugal and these three movements agreed that a transitional government, under a Portuguese High Commissioner, would rule the country until independence on 11 November 1975. Before independence would come elections for a Constituent Assembly which would elect Angola's first president.

The first high-level contact between the MPLA and Cuba following the coup in Portugal was in late December 1974, when two senior Cubans arrived in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania: Carlos Cadelo, the Communist party official whose portfolio included Angola, and Major Alfonso Pérez Morales (Pina), who had served, with great distinction, with the PAIGC guerrilla fighters in Guinea-Bissau. They met Neto and other MPLA leaders in Dar-es-Salaam and asked permission to travel to Angola. Neto approved: "He asked us to verify everything he had told us so that we could get an objective view of the real situation in Angola."³³

After two weeks in Angola, Cadelo and Pina met Neto again. Their subsequent report was lengthy (42 pages) and optimistic: the elections would take place; while the FNLA was militarily

stronger than the MPLA in the short term, the MPLA was building for the long haul, and this would bear fruit. "This movement," they wrote, "is the best structured politically and militarily, [and] as a result it enjoys extraordinary popular support."³⁴ Time favored the MPLA.

The report also included a letter from Neto specifying the aid he sought from Cuba [see doc. 4]. But Neto was, in fact, uncertain about what he wanted from Cuba. He told Pina and Cadelo that "once we know what weapons the Soviets are going to give us, we will have to adjust our military plans; exactly what we ask from Cuba will be contingent on this."³⁵ A recurring idea of military instructors floated in the air but was not precise. As Cadelo noted, "Even though Neto gave us a letter with some concrete demands, it was not really clear what the best form of cooperation with Cuba would be, or how and when it should be implemented."³⁶ On one point, however, Neto was definite: he wanted Cuba to provide the funds to ship the weapons the MPLA had in Dar-es-Salaam, its major arsenal, to Angola. Neto "said that he was confident that they would receive Soviet aid, but that it would not arrive for five months and that it was therefore imperative to move their material and equipment from Dar-es-Salaam to Angola."³⁷ Neto told Cadelo and Pina that he would need \$100,000 for the task.³⁸

But Cuba did not send the money, and nothing happened beyond the arrival of ten to twelve Angolans in Cuba for special training in March and April.³⁹ There is no indication in the Cuban documents I have seen that the MPLA renewed its requests until May, when Neto met Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Flavio Bravo in Brazzaville, "and asked [Cuba's] help to transport some weapons, and also asked about the possibility of a broader and more specific aid program." In late June, Neto met with Cadelo in Maputo, Mozambique, and renewed his request.⁴⁰

Three weeks later the United States decided to greatly expand the CIA's covert operation in Angola (increasing aid to the FNLA and initiating support

FIDEL CASTRO'S 1977 SOUTHERN AFRICA TOUR: A REPORT TO HONECKER

Editor's Note: In early 1977, Cuban President Fidel Castro took an extensive tour of Africa and then continued on to Europe and the USSR. During a stop in East Berlin, Castro recounted his experiences to East German Communist leader Erich Honecker. The record of those discussions was located in the archives of the former ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) by Christian F. Ostermann (CWIHP/National Security Archive).

The following excerpt—from a discussion on 3 April 1977 at the House of the SED Central Committee in East Berlin—contains Castro's impressions of the situations in several southern African countries, (e.g., Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, People's Republic of the Congo), and several guerrilla or liberation groups in the region, such as the African National Congress (ANC), then struggling for power in South Africa, and two groups fighting to rule Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African Political Union (ZAPU). Also included are Castro's assessments of individual political leaders, remarks about coordination with Moscow, and an overall conclusion that Africa was the place to inflict a major blow against world imperialism. (For Castro's remarks at this meeting on the situation in the Horn of Africa, see the excerpts printed later in this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin.)

Transcript of Honecker-Castro, Meeting, 3 April 1977 (excerpts)

Minutes of the conversation between Comrade Erich Honecker and Comrade Fidel Castro, Sunday, 3 April 1977 between 11:00 and 13:30 and 15:45 and 18:00, House of the Central Committee, Berlin.

Participants: Comrades Hermann Axen, Werner Lamberz, Paul Verner, Paul Markowski (with Comrades Edgar Fries and Karlheinz Mobus as interpreters), Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Osmany Cien-
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for UNITA), but there is no evidence that Cuba and the MPLA knew about it. What they knew—and indeed it was public knowledge—was that the pro-American Zairean government of Mobutu Sese Seko had sent troops into northern Angola on Roberto's side. By May, Portugal was no longer making any attempt to police even the main crossing points with Zaire and it was reported that over one thousand Zairean soldiers were in northern Angola.⁴¹ Angola, warned Neto, "was being subjected to a silent invasion by soldiers from Zaire."⁴²

By late July, Angola was in the throes of civil war and Havana finally geared into action. From August 3-8, a seven-man Cuban delegation, led by a very senior military officer, Raúl Díaz Argüelles, was in Angola. "Their mission was to pin down on the ground with the leaders of the MPLA exactly what aid they wanted, the objectives they expected to achieve with this aid, and the stages in which the aid should be given."⁴³ They also brought Neto the \$100,000 he had requested six months earlier. [See doc. 5]

Neto wanted Cuban military instructors. He did not have a precise figure in mind, but he was thinking of no more than a hundred men who would be spread out among many small training centers. He also wanted Cuba to send weapons, clothing, and food for the recruits. On the basis of this request, Díaz Argüelles drafted a proposal for a military mission "that would include 65 officers and 29 noncommissioned officers and soldiers for a grand total of 94 compañeros."⁴⁴

This plan was reworked in Havana after Díaz Argüelles returned. The revised plan contemplated the dispatch of 480 men who would create and staff four training centers (Centros de Instrucción Revolucionaria or CIRs). Some 5,300 Angolans would be trained in these CIRs within three to six months. Cuba would send the weapons for the instructors and for the recruits in the CIRs, as well as enough food, clothing, camping gear, toiletries, medicine, cots, and bedclothes for 5,300 men for six months. The CIRs would begin operating in mid-October.⁴⁵ In other words,

Cuba decided to offer Neto almost five times more instructors than he had requested. In Risquet's words, "If we were going to send our men, we had to send enough to fulfill the mission and to defend themselves, because too small a group would simply have been overwhelmed."⁴⁶

Contrary to the widespread image of the Cuban intervention in Angola, Havana had been slow to get involved. The documents that I have seen do not explain this delay, and I have not been able to interview those protagonists who could provide an answer, notably Fidel and Raúl Castro. Perhaps there was, on Cuba's part, a reluctance to be drawn into what could become an open-ended conflict. Perhaps there was reluctance to jeopardize relations with the West when, after a long period of isolation and hostility, they were markedly improving: for the first time, the United States was interested in a *modus vivendi* with Cuba;⁴⁷ the Organization of American States was preparing to lift its sanctions; and West European governments were offering low interest loans. Perhaps Cuba had feared that the dispatch of military instructors would offend even friendly African countries like Tanzania; or perhaps the attention of the Cuban leaders was distracted by the preparations for the first Congress of the Cuban Communist party that would be held in December. "The revolution was institutionalized in 1975," remarks Risquet. "It was a year of never-ending work. This may have played a role. And the situation in Angola was quite confused. In the first months of 1975 there was very little discussion in the sessions of the Political Bureau about Angola. Our focus was on domestic matters."⁴⁸

None of these explanations is very persuasive. By preparing to host a conference for the independence of Puerto Rico, Cuba was signalling that there were limits to the price it would pay for improved ties with Washington.⁴⁹ By sending troops to Syria in October 1973—troops that might well have become involved in a major clash with the Israelis—Cuba had demonstrated its continued willingness to take risks for a cause it believed just.⁵⁰ Some may

claim that Cuba did not move sooner to help the MPLA because the Soviet Union did not want it to. But can one seriously argue that Cuba needed Soviet permission to send \$100,000 to Neto? Others may repeat the canard that Cuba sent 200 military instructors to Angola in the spring of 1975,⁵¹ but the evidence flatly contradicts this. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, one can only note that the Cuban leaders were focusing on domestic matters and that relations with the MPLA since 1967 had not been intense. In July Cuba finally shifted gears. It was as if the music had suddenly changed; Cuba had made its choice, and Operation Carlota was born.

On August 21, Díaz Argüelles was back in Luanda as the head of the fledgling Cuban Military Mission in Angola (MMCA). He reported to Abelardo (Furry) Colomé, the first deputy minister of the Armed Forces. His reports from late August through October (all handwritten) are kept in the archives of the *Centro de Información de la Defensa de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias* and are a very important source on the evolution of the Cuban presence.⁵²

Díaz Argüelles' first order of business was to obtain Neto's approval for the 480-man military mission and four large CIRs. "Comrade Neto accepted our offer with great emotion," he informed Colomé in late August. "He was moved. He asked me to tell Fidel that they accept everything."⁵³

The members of the MMCA began arriving in late August, and they kept coming through September, all on commercial flights. There were slightly over 100 by early October. The others came aboard three Cuban ships that had left Havana on September 16-20: the *Vietnam Heroico* and the *Coral Island* docked at a beach near Puerto Amboim "where no one lives" on October 5 and 8 respectively; the *La Plata* reached Punta Negra (Congo Brazzaville) on the 11th. Díaz Argüelles described their arrival in a lengthy report to Colomé.⁵⁴

The three ships brought the weapons and equipment for the CIRs, including 12,000 Czech rifles for the Angolans. (They could not give them

Soviet weapons because in 1965 Moscow and Havana had signed an agreement that Cuba would seek the Soviets' permission before sending weapons it had received from them to a third party.) They also brought the trucks to transport the men and materiel to the CIRs. (The Cubans had correctly surmised that the MPLA would be unable to provide sufficient transportation.) There were problems, however, with the trucks that came aboard the *Vietnam Heroico* and the *Coral Island*, which "arrived in poor condition," Díaz Argüelles told Colomé,

and we had to repair a great many of them. . . . When I told you how important it was that the equipment arrive in good condition I was thinking about this kind of problem, because I knew that we would have to transport most of the men and material in our own trucks. The distances here are very great . . . and there are neither mechanics nor spare parts . . . Comandante, this is the largest operation we have ever undertaken and we are doing it in the worst conditions and circumstances. With little time for planning and with almost no knowledge of and experience in the country . . . we have had to improvise as we go along . . . It is a task of enormous magnitude . . . I have taken the steps necessary to start the training on October 15 . . . so that the troops will be ready on November 5.⁵⁵

By October 18-20, almost on schedule, the instructors, recruits and equipment were in place and the four CIRs were ready to start operations. On paper, the MMCA had 480 men, 390 of whom were instructors in the four CIRs and seventeen of whom were a medical brigade. (There were 284 officers.) Actually, there were almost 500, because a few civilian pilots had been sent at Díaz Argüelles' request to fly the small civilian planes that the MPLA had acquired and some specialists in air traffic control and handling cargo at ports were also attached to the MMCA.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the civil war continued. The FNLA controlled Angola's two northern provinces bordering on Zaire, where it had its supply line in men and material (which included, beginning in August, equipment sent by the

CIA). "Well armed, the army of the FNLA has but one obsession: Luanda," reported *Le Monde* in late August. One of Roberto's lieutenants boasted, "We have tanks. There is no force that can stop us from entering Luanda . . . We will take Luanda and it will be a bloodbath."⁵⁷ In mid-September, the head of the CIA Task Force on Angola wrote, "Mobutu committed his elite Seventh and Fourth Commando Battalions . . . and the tide swung back in favor of the FNLA north of Luanda."⁵⁸ The MPLA stopped their advance on September 26, just north of the village of Quifangondo—at Morro do Cal, 26 kilometers north of Luanda. As independence day (November 11) approached, Roberto's impatience grew. "The troops of the FNLA . . . will be in the capital on Tuesday," he declared on Friday, October 17. Over the next few days, he kept repeating that his troops would enter Luanda "within 24 hours."⁵⁹

On October 23, Roberto's forces—about 3,500 men, including some 1,200 Zairian troops⁶⁰—attacked Morro do Cal. But the 1,100 defenders, which included about 40 Cubans, held firm. This was the first time that Cubans participated in the fighting. Five days later, a group of Cuban instructors fought again, with the MPLA, east of Quifangondo to recover the village of Quiangombe.⁶¹

The MPLA had been gaining ground on the other fronts. "The present military situation favors the MPLA," wrote Díaz Argüelles on October 1.⁶² U.S. intelligence agreed. In a lengthy September 22 report, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department warned: "Since the outbreak of fighting in Angola in March, the MPLA has achieved an almost unbroken series of military successes . . . It is in complete control of Luanda and the surrounding areas . . . In the past two months it has won virtually complete control of the coast from Luanda south to the Namibian border and thereby has gained unimpeded access to five major ports." It was also in control of Cabinda, from which it could not be dislodged "without strong outside backing—i.e., direct Zairian military inter-

vention." It held key areas in eastern Angola (including virtually all the diamond-rich Lunda district). From its positions along the southern coast it was extending its control "well into the interior," threatening UNITA's core areas. Finally, the report pointed out, "Of major political significance is the fact that the MPLA controls 9 of Angola's 16 district capitals and is contesting a 10th at Luso in eastern Angola."⁶³

By mid-October, with the MPLA continuing to gain ground, a conservative British newspaper observed, "FNLA and UNITA know that they must improve their positions by November 11 or risk being left out in the cold," while the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that the MPLA was "making a vigorous fourpronged drive on Nova Lisboa," Savimbi's capital in the central highlands, and the South African military instructors attached to UNITA mused disconsolately "that the UNITA forces . . . are not in a position to offer the necessary resistance to the FAPLA [the MPLA armed forces] without help."⁶⁴ Meanwhile the Portuguese military was pulling its units back toward Luanda in preparation for withdrawal by November 11.

It has been said that the MPLA was winning because of the Cuban troops. But there were no Cuban troops, only instructors, and none had participated in any fighting until the handful fought at Morro do Cal on October 23. The real explanation for the MPLA's success is perhaps provided by the *Zambia Daily Mail*, which was unsympathetic to the movement. After noting that the MPLA was "almost certain to emerge as the dominant force" once the Portuguese departed, it stated: "There is a sense of purpose and a spirit of belonging among MPLA members and sympathizers which the two other movements cannot match."⁶⁵

The imminent victory of the MPLA forced South Africa, which had been providing weapons and military instructors to the FNLA and UNITA since late August, to make a decision. "The choice lay between active South African military participation on the one hand and—in effect—acceptance of an MPLA victory on the other," writes a South Afri-

can military historian. Prodded by UNITA, the FNLA, Mobutu and the United States, Pretoria decided to escalate. "The go-ahead was given on October 14."⁶⁶

That day, a South African column crossed into Angola from northeastern Namibia (South-West Africa). For the first few days the column moved west just north of the border. Then it veered north-west deep into Angola.⁶⁷ The South Africans advanced at full speed, sixty or seventy kilometers a day, meeting scant and ineffectual resistance. Sa da Bandeira (Lubango) fell on October 24; Moçamedes, the major port of southern Angola, on the 28th.

At first Díaz Argüelles underestimated the gravity of the threat. There were no Cubans in the area, and he had no clear idea of the strength of the enemy. "The MPLA still has the advantage, only ten days before independence," he concluded at the end of October. "The enemy, ill-prepared and dispirited, including the Zairian army units ... is giving us the breathing space to train the [MPLA] battalions."⁶⁸

On November 2 and 3, Cubans participated in the fighting for the first time since the battles for Morro do Cal and Quiangombe on October 23 and 28. This time, the military instructors joined in the fight to defend Benguela from the advancing South Africans. "We were facing the best organised and heaviest FAPLA opposition to date," wrote a South African, Cdr. Jan Breytenbach, who led one of the invading units.⁶⁹

Outgunned and outnumbered, the defenders of Benguela withdrew. Savimbi crowed: "Some time ago I promised you that there would be military surprises in Angola," he told the press in Kinshasa. "We are now witnessing the disintegration of Neto's troops on Angolan territory. Today I promise you even greater surprises before November 11, because we know that there are only nine days left."⁷⁰ On November 6, Benguela was in South African hands. The next day Lobito, twenty miles north of Benguela and Angola's major commercial port, fell. "We were, evidently, on our way to Luanda," writes Breytenbach. "Fresh troops were being deployed from South

Africa and the whole campaign was beginning to look more South African than Angolan."⁷¹

The South Africans, however, echoed by the entire Western press, absolutely denied that their troops were fighting in Angola and attributed the victories to a revived FNLA and UNITA. The MPLA, on the other hand, denounced the South African invasion as early as October 22.⁷²

As the South Africans were closing in on Benguela, the MPLA's Political Bureau "met in an emergency session" and listened to Neto's proposal: to ask Cuba for troops. "There was unanimous agreement," states a well-informed account. Central Committee member Henrique Santos, who had studied and trained in Cuba in the 1960s, immediately flew to Havana bearing the MPLA's request.⁷³ The Cubans' response "was, I can say, immediate," writes an MPLA leader.⁷⁴ On November 4, Cuba decided to send troops to Angola. "That same day the head of the MMCA was instructed to make arrangements with the MPLA for our planes to land in Luanda."⁷⁵

The first Cuban troops—158 men from the elite Special Forces of the Ministry of Interior—left aboard two Cuban planes on November 7, arriving in Luanda two days later.⁷⁶ Through the rest of November and December the Cubans succeeded in holding a line less than two hundred miles south of Luanda even though the South Africans enjoyed superiority in numbers and material. (North of Luanda, the Cubans swiftly defeated Roberto's motley horde.) There were numerous skirmishes and two small battles as the South Africans attempted to break through: at Ebo, on November 23—"Black Sunday," according to a South African historian—the Cubans scored a significant victory;⁷⁷ and on December 12, at Bridge 14, fourteen miles south of the strategic village of Catofe, the South Africans took their revenge, but the Cubans quickly regrouped and stopped them before they could reach Catofe. The South Africans were impressed: the *Cape Times* reported on November 21 that "FNLA and UNITA commanders [maintaining the fiction that South Af-

rican troops had nothing to do with it] greatly admired the courage of what they said were mercenaries from Cuba fighting with the MPLA." The official South African historian of the war writes, "The Cubans rarely surrendered and simply cheerfully fought until death."⁷⁸ By late December, the Cubans finally reached rough numerical parity with the South Africans and prepared to go on the offensive. [doc. 6]

According to Westad, "After the creation of the MPLA regime [on November 11] the [Soviet] Politburo authorized the Soviet General Staff to take direct control of the trans-Atlantic deployment of additional Cuban troops, as well as the supplying of these troops with advanced military hardware."⁷⁹ The Cuban evidence, however, tells a different story. Until January 1976, the it indicates, all Cuban troops and weapons were transported to Angola on Cuban ships and Cuban planes (Britannias and IL-18s) without any Soviet involvement. It was the Cubans' inability to find friendly places in which to refuel their planes that led them to seek Soviet help in late December. The Britannias and the IL-18s needed to refuel twice en route to Luanda. The second stop presented no problem: Guinea-Bissau was steadfast in its support. The problem was with the first stop. Initially, Barbados agreed, but under U.S. pressure it withdrew its permission on December 17; thereafter the Cubans used, in quick succession, Guyana and the Azores.⁸⁰ In early January, the Soviet Union agreed to provide its IL-62s, which could fly directly from Cuba to Bissau. The first IL-62 left Havana on January 9 with Cuban troops and Soviet pilots. (The Cubans had not yet been trained to fly the plane.)⁸¹

Risquet states that on 16 January 1976, Cuba and the USSR signed a military protocol in which the Soviets agreed to transport weapons for the Cuban troops in Angola.⁸² I have not seen the protocol. I have, however, two documents that support Risquet's statement: a January 29 letter from Risquet to Castro [doc. 7] and a January 30 note stating that two Soviet ships had left for Angola with the first shipment of weapons for the Cuban troops there.⁸³

It is important to put Westad's comments in context. He writes that ". . . the Soviet General Staff ordered about sixty of their own officers to join the Cuban forces from Congo. These men started arriving in Luanda on the evening of November 12." In the Cuban documents in my possession there are only six references to Soviet officers in Angola, and all of them are related to the dispatch of Soviet weapons to Angola [for one, see doc. 7]; none mentions any Soviet input into military strategy. Furthermore, I have seen an additional file of documents that would prove conclusively how little Soviet officials had to do with Cuban military strategy and tactics. These are cables from Fidel Castro to the Cuban commanders in Angola. They demonstrate the extraordinary degree of control that Castro exerted over the conduct of the war. In February 1996 I was allowed to read these cables, but, unfortunately, they may never be released—not because they contain controversial material (even the most ornery Cuban censor would be hard put to find much to sanitize in them), but because only Fidel Castro can declassify them and he is busy with other matters.

My failure to obtain copies of these cables is all the more frustrating since many, particularly Americans, may read this story of the early relationship between Cuba and Africa and reflexively ask, what about the Soviet Union? Wasn't Cuba acting as a Soviet proxy?

It is a frustrating question, for it requires one to prove a negative on the basis of incomplete information. Since no available documents bear directly on the question, I can only offer an informed opinion. There are two ways to address it. One is to look broadly at Cuba's Africa policy and its overall relationship to Soviet policy. The second is to analyze Cuban motivations in Africa.

During the period under consideration, Cuban and Soviet policies ran along parallel tracks in Africa. This was not a given: they could have been at loggerheads, as they were in Latin America through the mid-1960s because of Cuba's support for armed struggle there. No such clash, however, occurred in

Africa. In Algeria, for example, the Soviets had no objection to Cuba's very close relations with Ahmed Ben Bella's regime and seem to have welcomed Cuba's decision, in October 1963, to send a military force to help Algeria rebuff Morocco's attack. Similarly, in Congo Leopoldville the Soviets must have welcomed Guevara's column, since they were themselves helping the rebels. These parallel and often mutually supporting tracks are even more evident in the case of Guinea-Bissau. The Soviets began giving aid to the PAIGC in 1962, well before Cuba did. From June 1966, the Cuban military presence complemented and enhanced the Soviet role, since the Cubans were in charge of the increasingly sophisticated weapons provided by the USSR.

It follows, some may say, that the Cubans were mere cannon fodder for Moscow. But the fact that their policies ran along parallel tracks during this period did not make Cuba a Soviet agent or proxy. In fact, Cuba was following its own policy, a policy that happened to dovetail with that of the USSR. The case of Algeria is illustrative. The Cubans, at their own initiative, began supporting the Algerian rebels in 1961. Havana's decision to send troops in 1963 was taken less than two hours after a direct appeal by Ben Bella, making it unlikely that Castro would have had time to consult the Soviets even if he had wanted to.⁸⁴ In the Congo, likewise, Cuban policy was evidently not coordinated with Soviet policy. The conclusion is suggested by the fact that Che, his men, and their weapons travelled to Tanzania via the cumbersome method of taking commercial flights even though they could presumably have arrived on the Soviet ships that at about the same moment were docking at Dar-es-Salaam.⁸⁵ A firmer indication of this lack of coordination appears in "Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria (Congo)," the secret manuscript that Guevara wrote upon leaving the Congo. And certainly the Soviets played no role in the Cuban decision to withdraw. Castro left the decision to Guevara, his friend and commander-in-the field. [See doc. 3] The Soviet Union was not in the picture.

Cuba's policy in Africa was guided by Cuban national interest and ideology—a fact which U.S. analysts well understood. When Che went to Africa in December 1964, U.S. intelligence followed his trip closely. "Che Guevara's three-month African trip was part of an important new Cuban strategy," wrote Thomas Hughes, the director of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. This strategy, he argued, was based on Cuba's belief that a new revolutionary situation existed in Africa and that Cuba's own interest lay in the spreading of revolution there because in so doing it would gain new friends who would lessen her isolation and, at the same time, weaken U.S. influence. There was only one reference to the Soviet Union: "Cuba's African strategy," concluded Hughes, "is designed to provide new political leverage against the United States and the socialist bloc. . . . The Cubans doubtless hope that their African ties will increase Cuba's stature in the nonaligned world and help to force the major socialist powers to tolerate a considerable measure of Cuban independence and criticism."⁸⁶ This was a fair analysis of the pragmatic aspect of the policy, but it omitted the strong idealistic motive that also marked Cuban policy in Africa. Havana firmly believed that it had a duty to help those who were struggling for their freedom; it was this belief—not pragmatism—that led Cuba to help the Algerian rebels and risk the wrath of de Gaulle. As a PAIGC leader said, "The Cubans understood better than anyone that they had the duty to help their brothers to become free."⁸⁷

This policy would not have been possible without the volunteers—men who freely chose to risk their lives and endure sacrifices in order to serve Cuba and help others. Just as Havana was not bowing to Soviet pressure by intervening in Africa, so too did individual Cubans volunteer of their own free will. In Angola as well, Havana was not acting on behalf of the Soviet Union, even though President Ford and Secretary Kissinger liked to speak of "the Soviet Union and their Cuban mercenaries."⁸⁸ Rather, as former Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin

writes, the Cubans sent their troops to Angola “on their own initiative and without consulting us.” His testimony is supported by other Soviet officials.⁸⁹

To try to impose a Soviet dimension on the relationship between Cuba and Africa regarding the period and events examined in this article seems to me to warp reality to satisfy an ideological bias. Robert Pastor, the National Security staff member who oversaw Latin America during the Carter Administration, wrote much the same to his boss, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, in September 1979:

As we embark on another anti-Castro period, let me suggest that we try to use a different term to refer to the Cubans than that of “Soviet puppet.” My principal concern with that phrase is that it strains our credibility and gets people into debating the wrong issue. . . . The word “puppet” suggests that the Cubans are engaging in revolutionary activities because the Soviets have instructed them to do it. That, of course, is not the case. . . . I fear that if you or the President use the term “Soviet puppet” in the future, you might just open yourselves to unnecessary charges that our information or analysis is faulty.⁹⁰

As former U.S. Undersecretary of State George Ball has written, “Myths are made to solace those who find reality distasteful and, if some find such fantasy comforting, so be it.”⁹¹

DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1: Flavio Bravo, deputy commander of the Cuban forces in Algeria, to Raúl Castro, Algiers, 21 October 1963, pp. 2-3.

My dear Raúl:

Yesterday, we found out that Efigenio [Ameijeiras] and 170 *compañeros* are going to arrive tomorrow at 3:00 in two planes and that today, finally!, the ship is going to arrive.⁹² ...⁹³

The situation demands that the entire socialist camp send aid. Unfortunately, however, our friends here are not receiving this aid: promises and more promises, but the weapons never arrive. Meanwhile, [King] Hassan [of Morocco] has a battalion of Soviet tanks, MIGs and other Soviet

weapons. And so we are going to face the bizarre situation of having to go to war against Soviet weapons! Some of the Algerian officers are not only worried ... but indignant. They ask, and rightly so, how can the Soviet comrades help feudal kings like Hassan and not understand that a real revolution, like Cuba’s, is taking place here ...

As for the socialist countries of eastern Europe, the less said the better. According to *compañeros* here, “They have behaved like greedy shopkeepers who want to be paid in dollars (and at higher prices than the Yankees) for the help the Algerian people need.” ...

If you consider it useful, I think you should share these impressions of mine with our good friend Alejandro [Aleksandr Alekseyev, the Soviet ambassador to Cuba]. I know that this is not the first time that the Algerian problem has been raised. I believe that Fidel discussed it there [during his visit to the Soviet Union in spring 1963], but there is no harm in raising it again. Our Algerian friends have their own customs and their pride. They don’t like asking for help, and they say that they would rather fight with knives than ask again. They say that they have already explained the problem, which in any case is not difficult to understand. ...

Aldo [Santamaria, the head of the Cuban navy], who has left for Oran, and Papito [Serguera] send you greetings. I think that our “ebullient” ambassador [Sergio Serguera] has scored a great victory and has saved not our prestige—which was very high—but that of the entire socialist camp.

We will continue to keep you informed.

Flavio

[Source: *Centro de Información de la Defensa de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (CID-FAR), Havana.*]

DOCUMENT 2: Excerpt from Che Guevara’s “Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria (Congo)” on his meeting with African liberation movement leaders in Dar-es-Salaam in February 1965.

I decided to try to get a sense of the “Freedom Fighters” state of mind; I had intended to do it in separate meetings, in friendly conversations, but because of a mistake at the embassy, there was instead a “monster” meeting with at least fifty people representing movements of at least ten countries, each divided into two or three factions. I addressed them, discussing the requests for financial aid or training that almost all of them had made to us; I explained the cost of training a man in Cuba—the amount of

money and time that it took—and the uncertainty that the resulting combatants would indeed prove useful to the movement. I explained our experience in the Sierra Maestra, where, for every five recruits we trained, we ended up, on average, with only one good soldier and for every five of these soldiers, only one was really good. I argued as vehemently as I could in front of the exasperated “Freedom Fighters” that the money invested in training would be largely wasted; one cannot make a soldier in an academy and much less a revolutionary soldier. This is done on the battlefield.

I proposed to them, therefore, that the training not take place in faraway Cuba, but in nearby Congo [Che is therefore proposing that the recruits of non-Congolese guerrilla movements fight in the Congo] ... I explained to them why we considered the war for the liberation of the Congo to be of fundamental importance: victory there would have repercussions throughout the continent, as would defeat. Their reaction was more than cold; even though most refrained from making any comment, some bitterly reproached me. They stated that their people, ill-treated and abused by the imperialists, would object if they were to suffer losses to free not their own, but another country. I tried to make them understand that the real issue was not the liberation of any given state, but a common war against the common master, who was one and the same in Mozambique and in Malawi, in Rhodesia and in South Africa, in the Congo and in Angola, but not one of them agreed. Their goodbyes were polite and frosty.

[Source: Guevara, “Pasajes,” 13-14.]

DOCUMENT 3: On 4 November 1965, Che Guevara, who was in the Congo, received a cable from Oscar Fernández Padilla, head of the Cuban intelligence station in Dar-es-Salaam. The cable said:

I am sending you, via courier, a letter from Fidel. Its key points are:

“1. We must do everything except that which is foolhardy.

“2. If Tatu [Guevara] believes that our presence has become either unjustifiable or pointless, we have to consider withdrawing.

“3. If he thinks we should remain we will try to send as many men and as much material as he considers necessary.

“4. We are worried that you may wrongly fear that your decision might be considered defeatist or pessimistic.

“5. If Tatu decides to leave [the Congo], he can return here or go somewhere else [while waiting for a new internationalist

mission].

“6. We will support whatever decision [Tatu makes].

“7. Avoid annihilation.”

[Source: Rafael [Fernández Padilla] to Tatu, 4 November 1965, Archives of the Cuban Communist Party CC, Havana. See also Guevara, “Pasajes,” 118-19.]

DOCUMENT 4: Letter from Neto to Cuban leadership, Dar-es-Salaam, 26 January 1975

Dear Comrades,

Given the situation on the ground of our movement and our country, and taking into account the results of the exploratory trip of the official Cuban delegation [Cadelo and Pina], we are sending you a list of the urgent needs of our organization. We are confident that you will give it immediate consideration.

1. The establishment, organization, and maintenance of a military school for cadres. We urgently need to create a company of security personnel, and we need to prepare the members of our military staff.

2. We need to rent a ship to transport the war material that we have in Dar-es-Salaam to Angola. The delivery in Angola, if this were a Cuban ship, could take place outside of the territorial waters.

3. Weapons and means of transportation for the Brigada de Intervención that we are planning to organize, as well as light weapons for some infantry battalions.

4. Transmitters and receivers to solve the problem of communication among widely dispersed military units.

5. Uniforms and military equipment for 10,000 men.

6. Two pilots and one flight mechanic.

7. Assistance in training trade union leaders.

8. Cooperation in the organization of schools for the teaching of Marxism (to solve the problems of the party).

9. Publications dealing with political and military subjects, especially instruction manuals.

10. Financial assistance in this phase of establishing and organizing ourselves.

We also urge that the Communist Party of Cuba use its influence with other countries that are its friends and allies, especially from the Socialist camp, so that they grant useful and timely aid to our movement, which is the only guarantee of a democratic and progressive Angola in the future.

Comrades, accept our revolutionary greetings and convey the good wishes of the combatants of the MPLA and of the new

Angola to Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

[Source: Neto, “Necesidades urgentes. Lista dirigida al: Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba,” 26 January 1975, Anexo no. 3, pp. 22-23, in “Informe sobre la visita realizada por el mayor Rodobaldo Díaz Padraga a Angola en los días del 16.11.75 (Frente sur),” n.d., Centro de Información de la Defensa de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, Havana.]

DOCUMENT 5: Raúl Díaz Argüelles to the Armed Forces minister [Raúl Castro], 11 August 1975

Report on the visit to Angola and on the conversations held with Agostinho Neto, president of the MPLA, and the Political Bureau of the MPLA, as well as with chiefs of the army staff of the FAPLA [the MPLA’s armed forces]:

1. We arrived at Luanda, Angola, on Sunday, August 3 and established contact with the MPLA. They immediately took us to a hotel. When President Neto heard about [our arrival], he sent for us and put some of us up in his house and the rest of the delegation in another compañero’s house.

In our first conversation with Neto we greeted him on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief [Fidel Castro] and the Minister of the Armed Forces [Raúl Castro], we gave him the present and the note from the Commander-in-Chief and then we explained the purpose of our visit.

We based our explanation on the following points:

a) The request made by the MPLA when it was visited by a delegation from our party and our government in January [Cadelo and Pina] and the request made later in Mozambique by Cheito, the chief of staff of the FAPLA.

b) These requests were somewhat contradictory: during the January visit they asked for aid and the training of cadres in Cuba and in Angola, and later in Mozambique they asked only for the training of cadres in Cuba.

c) We were coming to clarify the aid we should offer, given the FNLA’s and Mobutu’s aggression against the MPLA and the possible course of events before independence in November. We knew that the forces of reaction and imperialism would try with all their might to prevent the MPLA from taking power, because it would mean a progressive government in Angola. Therefore we were bringing Neto the militant solidarity of our Commander-in-Chief, our party and our government, and we gave him

the \$100,000.

In the course of this conversation, the Angolans complained about the paucity of aid from the socialist camp, and they pointed out that if the socialist camp does not help them, no one will, since they are the most progressive forces [in the country], whereas the imperialists, Mobutu and ... [one word SANITIZED] are helping the FNLA in every way possible. They also complained that the Soviet Union stopped aiding them in 1972 and that although it is now sending them weapons, the amount of assistance is paltry, given the enormity of the need. In general, he [Neto] wants to portray the situation in Angola as a crucial struggle between the two systems—Imperialism and Socialism—in order to receive the assistance of the entire socialist camp. We believe that he is right in this, because at this time the two camps in Angola are well defined, the FNLA and UNITA represent reaction and world imperialism and the Portuguese reactionaries, and the MPLA represents the progressive and nationalist forces.

We agreed that we would meet again the next day, because we needed to finalize the exact timetables, quantities and details etc. of the requests they had made.

[Half a page SANITIZED—trans.]

We believe that [the MPLA] enjoys the general support of the population; the population is organized and ready to fight, but lacks weapons, as well as food, clothing and basic gear. We believe that we must help them directly or indirectly to remedy this situation which is in essence the resistance of an entire people against the forces of reaction and imperialism.

Revolucionariamente,

[Source: CID-FAR.]

DOCUMENT 6: Risquet to Fidel Castro, Luanda, 30 December 1975

Commander-in-Chief,

I have just returned from a tour of Quibala, Catofe, Conde, Ebo, Gabela, Point Amboim. The morale of the [Cuban military] commanders with whom I spoke (Polo [Leopoldo Cintra Frías], [Manuel] Cervantes, [Armando] Saucedo etc. at the southern front headquarters; [Romérico] Sotomayor, Calixto Rodríguez Proenza and René [Hernández Gatorno]; [Jesús] Oviedo in Point Amboim) is very high: they are optimistic and full of ideas about how to strike the enemy. The morale of the soldiers and officers with whom we spoke was equally high. [Fernando] Vecino [Alegret], [Luis Alfonso] Zayas and, for the first part, Furry [Abelardo Colomé Ibarra], accompa-

nied me.

This high morale, the large number of our troops and the large supply of material, the nature of the terrain, and the material and psychological condition of the enemy lead me to conclude that there are no big problems for our [defensive] line at Amboim-Ebo-Quibala-Cariango; that we have recovered the initiative in the south; that in the next few days our "active defense" will gain ground in the south. ...

Risquet.⁹⁴

[Source: Archives of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, Havana.]

DOCUMENT 7: Risquet to Fidel Castro, Luanda, 29 January 1976

Commander-in-Chief,

Regarding the Cuban weapons delivered by the USSR in Luanda: We have explained the situation clearly to President Neto, who understood it perfectly without expressing any doubts.

1. "Furry [Colomé]⁹⁵ and I spoke with Neto alone the day after Furry's return [from Moscow where he had gone to report to Fidel Castro, who was attending the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union], and we informed him of your decision to send more troops, fully armed, in order to amass the forces necessary both fully to accomplish the goal of freeing the country from the South African and Zairian invasions and also to be in a position to counter any possible increases in their forces.

We told him [Neto] that some of the new Cuban troops will arrive by boat with their weapons and the rest will come to Luanda by plane, where they will pick up weapons that the Soviet Union is going to send for them.

We explained to him that this will allow us to avoid the unnecessary time, expense and risk of having the Soviets send these weapons to Cuba and then having to transport them to Angola with the troops.

Neto understood and approved without any qualm or hesitation.

2. Three days later, the Soviet general [head of the Soviet military mission in Angola] told us he too would like to inform [Neto], on behalf of the USSR, about the delivery of the Soviet weapons to the Cubans in Angola. We agreed that the most appropriate way would be that he, Furry, and I meet again with Neto alone. And so we did. The general explained in some detail what weapons were being sent.

Neto raised no objection whatsoever, wrote down the most important weapons,

said that he would inform the Political Bureau of this increase [of men and arms], and appeared very satisfied with it, as an additional guarantee to counter whatever the South Africans, the Zairians and the Imperialists might do.

In this meeting, Furry itemized some of the men and materiel that were coming aboard the Cuban ships. He spoke of a regiment.

3. Nevertheless, taking into account the concern you expressed in your cable of yesterday, in the meeting that Oramas⁹⁶ and I had today with the president to discuss other matters (SWAPO, Katangans, etc.), I returned as if in passing to this matter, and I gave him a list of the weapons that will be arriving on future Soviet ships and that are for the Cuban troops.

I added that all the weapons that had arrived in Soviet ships (the 73 tanks, the 21 BM-21s, etc.) so far, as well as the ten MIG-17s, belonged to the People's Republic of Angola.

[I stressed] that the MIG-21s that were coming in the AN-22 planes as well as the weapons that were arriving in the Soviet ships and that were enumerated in the list that I had given him were acquired by Cuba in the USSR and delivered to Cuba by the USSR in Luanda.

We told him that the Cuban troops, with all these weapons, would remain in Angola for as long as it took and for as long as he considered necessary, and that we would take care of the training of the Angolan personnel, so that they would be able to operate the tanks, the planes, Katyushas [rocket-propelled grenade launchers], mortars, cannons, etc. And that if the weapons delivered to the PRA [People's Republic of Angola] were to prove insufficient for the future Angolan army, the USSR would always be ready to provide what was required, etc., etc.

That is, our conversation was absolutely brotherly and without the smallest misunderstanding or reproach. However, we wanted to be absolutely clear—and we left the list as written evidence—so that there could be no misunderstandings, now or in the future.

We consider this matter to be totally clear and settled. Let me know whether you believe that this task has been accomplished or whether you think it is necessary to do something more about it.

Greetings,

Risquet

[Source: Archives of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, Havana.]

¹ I would like to thank the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for helping to support this research.

² Interview with Manuel Agramonte, Havana, 2 July 1994. The only two studies worth citing are William Durch "The Cuban Military in Africa and the Middle East: From Algeria to Angola," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Spring/Summer 1978, 34-63 and Gisela García, *La misión internacionalista de Cuba en Argelia (1963-1964)* [The Internationalist Mission of Cuba in Algeria (1963-1964)] (Havana: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, 1990). A garbled account of Che Guevara's struggle in Zaire, based on his unpublished manuscript, is Paco Ignacio Taibo et al., *El año que estuvimos en ninguna parte* [The Year We Were Nowhere] (Mexico City: Planeta, 1994).

³ Jorge Risquet, note to author, Havana, 13 July 1996.

⁴ For full information on sources for Algeria, see Piero Gleijeses, "Cuba's First Venture in Africa: Algeria, 1961-1965," *Journal of Latin American Studies* (February 1996), 159-95.

⁵ José Ramón Machado Ventura, note to author, Havana, 12 July 1995, 1.

⁶ *Verde Olivo* (Havana), 28 June 1964, 51-52.

⁷ See Piero Gleijeses, "'Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!' The United States, the Mercenaries, and the Congo, 1964-1965," *Diplomatic History*, Spring 1994, 207-37.

⁸ Che Guevara, "Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria (Congo)" [Episodes of the Revolutionary War], Dar-es-Salaam, late 1965, 13 (private collection, Havana).

⁹ CIA Special Memorandum, "Implications of Growing Communist Influence in URTZ," 29 September 1964, 11, Freedom of Information Act request (hereafter FOIA) 1977/91F.

¹⁰ Interviews with Godefroid Tschamlesso, an aide to Kabila (Havana, 30 June 1994) and Marcelino dos Santos, a Mozambican rebel leader (Havana, 27 June 1994).

¹¹ Guevara, "Pasajes," 12-13, 120, 14.

¹² Quotations from CIA, Office of Current Intelligence, "Brazzaville's Move to the Left," 30 October 1964, 5, National Security File Country File: Congo, box 83, Lyndon B. Johnson Library (hereafter LBJL), Austin, Texas; and "Discurso pronunciado por Raúl Castro Ruz en acto por el XX aniversario de la construcción de las columnas de combatientes internacionalistas cubanos que cumplieron misiones en el Congo Brazzaville y el Congo Leopoldville" [Speech by Raúl Castro Ruz on the 20th anniversary of the creation of the columns of internationalist Cuban fighters who went to Congo Brazzaville and Congo Leopoldville], 11 November 1965, 7, Archives of the Central Committee, Havana.

¹³ Guevara, "Pasajes," 10.

¹⁴ See Jorge Risquet, "Brizna de paja en la oreja" [Straw in the ear], Brazzaville, 12 July 1966, Archives of the Central Committee, Havana.

¹⁵ Interview with Rolando Kindelán, Havana, 11 March 1996.

¹⁶ Rodolfo Puente Ferro, head of the medical brigade attached to the column, in Luis Hernández and Félix López, "Africa mía," *Juventud Rebelde* (Havana), 3 December 1995, 8-9.

¹⁷ Helenio Ferrer and Rodolfo Puente Ferro to Machado Ventura, 19 May 1966, Archives of the

Ministry of Public Health, Havana; Ferrer, "Informe sobre campaña de vacunación (Continuación)" [Report on the vaccination campaign (Continued)], 27 May 1966, *ibid.*; interviews with Jorge Risquet (Havana, 20 June 1994); with the Cuban doctors Rodolfo Puente Ferro (Havana, 21 June 1994) and Rodrigo Alvarez Cambra (Havana, 12 March 1996); and with Tirso Arcide Reyna (Havana, 5 March 1996), a Cuban soldier who helped in the campaign.

18 See Empresa Cubana de Navegación, [record of the *Luis Arcos Bergnes*], Manifiesto de pasajeros congolese, Centro de Información de la Defensa de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, Havana (hereafter CID-FAR); J' Transporte U/M 1546 to J' Servicios U/M 1546, 15 February 1966, CID-FAR; Estado Mayor General de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, "Relación de personal especial que se encuentra en El Cano," 24 February 1966, CID-FAR. Interviews with the Cubans doctors Alvarez Cambra, Puente Ferro and Julian Alvarez (Havana, 5 April 1994) and with two other Cubans who participated in the operation: Ulises Estrada (Havana, 30 March 1994) and Rafael Orlando Duany (Havana, 12 March 1996); *Granma* (Havana), 5 July 1966, 1. See also René Gauze, *The Politics of Congo-Brazzaville* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1973), 205. and "Brazzaville — Cuba's new base?" *African Review*, August 1966, 10.

19 "Policy Planning Memorandum No. 1," 9, enclosed in Department of State to all African Diplomatic Posts, Lisbon, London, Paris, Rome, 2 December 1971, FOIA 1982/0426. See also Bennett (Lisbon) to Dept. of State, 3 April 1968, FOIA 1982/0392; Bennett (Lisbon) to SecState, 16 July 1969, FOIA 1983/0449; Dept. of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Portuguese Guinea: Talks About Talks," 3 March 1970, FOIA 1982/1049; "Portuguese Guinea: Guidelines for Policy," enclosed in Irwin to U.S. Embassy Lisbon, 2 October 1970, FOIA 1982/1879.

20 President Luís Cabral, *Nô Pintcha* (Bissau), 22 January 1977, 4-6. On the Guinea-Bissau story, see Piero Gleijeses, "The First Ambassadors: Cuba's Contribution to Guinea-Bissau's War of Independence," *Journal of Latin American Studies* (forthcoming, February 1997).

21 Interview with João Bernardo Vieira (Nino), Bissau, 1 May 1996. The conclusions in this paragraph are based on: a) a great number of Cuban documents in my possession, the most important of which are "Ayuda brindada por la República de Cuba al Partido Africano por la Independencia de Guinea y las Islas de Cabo Verde (PAIGC)" [Help given by the Republic of Cuba to the African Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde], CID-FAR, and Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (hereafter MINFAR), "Realización de la Operación 'Amílcar Cabral,'" (1974), CID-FAR; b) interviews in Havana with over 20 Cuban protagonists; c) interviews in Bissau (25 April-1 May 1996) with the following senior PAIGC officials: Nino, Leopoldo Alfama, António Borges, Fidelis Cabral, Arafam Mané, Joseph Turpin, Vasco Cabral.

22 Interview with Francisca Pereira, Bissau, 25 April 1996. The exception was the Panamanian doctor Hugo Spadafora from July 1966 to May 1967. In addition to the sources listed in the previous footnote, I rely on three major groups of

sources: a) Luís Cabral, *Crónica da Libertação* [History of the War of Liberation] (Lisbon: Edições O Jornal, 1984), 253-54 and *passim* and Hugo Spadafora, *Experiencias y pensamiento de un médico guerrillero* [Experiences and Thoughts of a Guerrilla Doctor] (Panama City: Centro de Impresión Educativa, 1980), 15-79; b) interviews in Bissau (29 April-2 May 1996) with the following Guinean doctors and physician's assistants who served in the war: Paulo Medina, Venancio Furtado, Gaudêncio de Sousa Carvahlo, Ernesto Lopes Moreira and Paulo Alves; c) interviews in Havana with the Cuban doctors Luis Peraza (5 July 1994), Milton Hechavarría (20 July 1995), Raúl Candebat (12 July 1995), Pablo Pérez Capdet and Rubén Pérez de León (both on 28 February 1996).

23 Interviews with Estrada (Havana, 7 December 1994) and Oscar Cárdenas (Havana, 5 December 1993).

24 Interview with Víctor Dreke (Havana, 26 June 1994).

25 Interview with Robinson McIlvaine, Washington, D.C., 5 February 1996. See also Gleijeses, "Flee!" 220-21; CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Cuban Meddling in Africa," 24 March 1967, 4, FOIA 1996/605; U.S. CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Some Aspects of Subversion in Africa," 19 October 1967, 9, National Security File Country File: Union of South Africa, box 78, LBJL; CIA, National Intelligence Estimate, "The Liberation Movements of Southern Africa," 24 November 1967, National Security File, NIE, box 8, LBJL; Knight (Lisbon) to Dept. of State, 19 October 1971, 2, FOIA 1982/1889; "Policy Planning Memorandum No. 1," enclosed in Dept. of State to all African Diplomatic Posts, Lisbon, London, Paris, Rome, 2 December 1971, FOIA 1982/0426; Knight (Lisbon) to Dept. of State, 7 January 1972, FOIA 1982/2672.

26 Interview with Paul O'Neil, Washington, D.C., 20 February 1992.

27 "Discurso pronunciado," 2.

28 Lucio Lara, "A história do MPLA" [A History of the MPLA], n.d., 100. I would like to thank Dr. Christine Messiant of the Centre d'Etudes Africaines of Paris for sharing this important, unpublished document with me.

29 Rafael Moracén, who fought in Cabinda, allowed me to photocopy his diary, "Diario de campaña de Humberto Vazquez Mancevo." In addition to Moracén (Havana, 21 June 1994), I also interviewed several other Cubans who fought in Cabinda: Osvaldo Fuente Veitía (Havana, 25 June 1994); Rafael Orlando Duany (Havana, 12 March 1996); Fernando Galindo (Havana, 12 March 1996); Tirso Arcide Reyna (Havana, 5 March 1996). See also: César Augusto Kiluanji, *Trajectória da vida de um guerrilheiro* [The Life of a Guerrilla] (Lisbon: Editorial Vanguardia, 1990), 29-34.

30 Moracén, "Diario de campaña," entry of September 1965.

31 Interview with Moracén.

32 Interviews with Carlos Cadelo, the Communist party official whose portfolio included Angola (Havana, 7 July 1995), and with Félix Véliz Hernández (Havana, 3 July 1995) and Luis Mario Burgos (Havana, 24 June 1994), who were preparing to leave for eastern Angola; MINFAR, "Síntesis histórica de la ayuda internacionalista

de Cuba a la R.P.A. [Summary of the history of the internationalist assistance given by Cuba to the P.R.A.], n.d., 3, Archives of the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, Havana. (Hereafter "Síntesis")

33 "Conversación con Agostinho Neto, día 31 de diciembre de 1974 [Conversation with Agostinho Neto, 31st of December 1974]," Appendix no. 6, enclosed in "Informe sobre la visita realizada a Angola" [Report on the Visit to Angola], 21 March 1975, 31, CID-FAR. (Hereafter "Informe sobre la visita")

34 "Informe sobre la visita," 1.

35 "Conversación con Agostinho Neto al finalizar la visita a Angola" [Conversation with Agostinho Neto at the conclusion of his visit to Angola], enclosed in "Informe sobre la visita," 32-33.

36 Cadelo, note to author, Havana 15 July 1995, 7.

37 Conversación con Agostinho Neto, día 31 de diciembre de 1974," enclosed in "Informe sobre la visita," quotation on p. 31; interviews with Cadelo and Alfonso Pérez Morales (Pina) (Havana, 28 February 1996).

38 "Conversación con Agostinho Neto al finalizar la visita a Angola," enclosed in "Informe sobre la visita," 33.

39 Interview with Cadelo.

40 Andrés González Ballester, "Estudio de la colaboración militar cubano-angolana, 1975-1976," Havana, Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales, 1989, quotation on p. 10; Cadelo, note to author, 10.

41 See *The Observer*, 20 April 1975, 11, and 18 May 1975, 5; *Le Monde*, 3 May 1975, 6.

42 *Zambia Daily Mail* (Lusaka), 21 April 1975, 1.

43 "Informe sobre las actividades ejecutadas por el Partido Comunista de Cuba y Gobierno Revolucionario para dar cumplimiento a la ayuda solicitada por el Movimiento Popular para la Liberación de Angola [Report on the actions taken by the Communist party of Cuba and the Revolutionary Government to deliver the aid requested by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola]," (hereafter "Informe sobre las actividades"), CID-FAR, 1 (quoted); "Síntesis," 5; interviews with Cadelo and Víctor Schueg Colás (Havana, 27 February 1996), who were members of the delegation.

44 "Síntesis," 6.

45 See "Síntesis," 6-7 and "Informe sobre las actividades," 1-2.

46 Interview with Risquet, Havana, 15 February 1996.

47 See the trailblazing article by Peter Kornbluh and James Blight, "Dialogue with Castro: A Hidden History," *The New York Review of Books*, 6 October 1994, 45-49.

48 Interview with Risquet. In his capacity as a member of the Secretariat of the PCC, Risquet attended the sessions of the Political Bureau.

49 The preparatory meeting for the conference was held in Havana in late March 1975. The Conferencia Internacional de Solidaridad con la Independencia de Puerto Rico was held in Havana on September 5-8. (See *Granma*, 1, 5, 15 April 1975, all 1; 5 September 1975, 1; 6 September 1975, 8; 9 September 1975, 2.)

50 The mission to Syria (October 1973-January 1975) is briefly described in MINFAR, "Las misiones internacionalistas desarrolladas por las

FAR en defensa de la independencia y la soberanía de los pueblos" [Internationalist missions of the FAR in defense of the independence and the sovereignty of other peoples], n.d., 26-34, Archives of the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, Havana.

⁵¹ *Le Monde*, 14 January 1976, 8; Kissinger's testimony of 29 January 1976 in U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, *Angola*, 94th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), 17; *New York Times*, 5 February 1976, 12; *Sunday Telegraph* (London), 30 January 1977, 8; Fred Bridgland, "The Future of Angola," *South Africa International*, July 1988, 32; *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1976, 9.

⁵² See Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, n.d. [late August 1975], 4; Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 2 September 1975, 14; Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 3 September 1975, 9 (signed by Díaz Argüelles but the handwriting is Cadelo's); Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, n.d. [late September 1975], 5; Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 1 October 1975, 15; Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 15 October 1975, 26; Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 16 October 1975, 2; "Situación militar en Angola. Octubre/75" [Military Situation in Angola, October 1975], November (1?), 1975, 13. Díaz Argüelles also cabled specific requests. See MINFAR "Solicitud de Argüelles," 25 August 1975 through 26 September 1975, CID-FAR. After Cuba decided to send troops to Angola on November 4, a more senior officer, Leopoldo Cintra Frías, replaced Díaz Argüelles as head of the MMCA. He arrived in Angola on November 11.

⁵³ Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, n.d. [late August 1975], 1, 4, CID-FAR.

⁵⁴ Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 15 October 1975, 2, CID-FAR.

⁵⁵ Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 15 October 1975, 5, 9-11, 12, CID-FAR. See also MINFAR, "Composición de fuerzas y medios de la unidad incluyendo el incremento del Punto 4," n.d. [late October 1975]. On the 1965 agreement: interview with Estrada, who was a senior intelligence officer at the time, Havana, 18 December 1994.

⁵⁶ MINFAR, "Composición de fuerzas y medios de la unidad incluyendo el incremento del Punto 4," n.d. [late October 1975]; MINFAR "Solicitud de Argüelles," 25 August 1975 through 26 September 1975, CID-FAR; "Informe sobre las actividades," 3; "Síntesis," 11-12.

⁵⁷ Quotations from *Le Monde*, 20 August 1975, 4 and 19 August 1975, 3. The best analysis of the US role in the Angolan civil war is Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (rev. ed., Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1994), 556-93.

⁵⁸ John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: Norton, 1978), 163.

⁵⁹ Quotations from *Elima* (Kinshasa), 21 October 1975, 1, and 23 October 1975, 1.

⁶⁰ See F.J. du Toit Spies, *Operasie Savannah. Angola 1975-1976* (Pretoria: S.A. Weermag, 1989), 132 and Sophia du Preez, *Aventuur in Angola. Die verhaal van Suid-Afrika se soldate in Angola 1975-1976* [Adventure in Angola: The Story of South Africa's Soldiers in Angola 1975-1976] (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik 1989), 113.

⁶¹ Díaz Argüelles, "Situación militar en Angola. Octubre / 75," November (1?) 1975, 3-5, CID-FAR; "Síntesis," 14-17.

⁶² Díaz Argüelles to Colomé, 1 October 1975, 11, CID-FAR.

⁶³ Dept. of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Angola: The MPLA Prepares for Independence," 22 September 1975, 4-5, FOIA Collection, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁴ Quotations from: *Daily Telegraph* (London), 10 October 1975, 16; *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 23 October 1975, 1; Spies, *Operasie Savannah*, 82.

⁶⁵ *Zambia Daily Mail* (Lusaka), 9 October 1975, 4.

⁶⁶ Quotations from Helmoed-Römer Heitman, *South African War Machine* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1985), 170 and Dirk and Johanna de Villiers, *P.W. - A Biography of South Africa's President P.W. Botha* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1984), 251. On the controversial issue of Washington's role, a good starting point is Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (New York: Norton, 1992), 49.

⁶⁷ See Spies, *Operasie Savannah*, 87-95 and du Preez, *Aventuur*, 65-72. For the South African campaign, see Cdr. Jan Breytenbach, *Forged in Battle* (Cape Town: Saayaman & Weber, 1986); idem, *They Live By the Sword* (Alberton, S.A.: Lemur, 1990), 18-66; Spies, *Operasie Savannah*; du Preez, *Aventuur*.

⁶⁸ Díaz Argüelles, "Situación militar en Angola. Octubre/75," November (1?) 1975, 10, CID-FAR.

⁶⁹ Breytenbach, *Forged in Battle*, 72.

⁷⁰ *Elima*, 3 November 1975, 1.

⁷¹ Breytenbach, *Forged in Battle*, 108-09.

⁷² For the Western press, see *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 November 1975, 8; *Cape Times*, 13 November 1975, 1; *London Times*, 6 November 1975, 5; *Washington Post*, 7 November 1975, 7; *Guardian* (Manchester), 4 November 1975, 3; *New York Times*, 9 November 1975, 18. For the MPLA's denunciations, see *FBIS*, VIII, 23 October 1975, E2 and *Granma*, 25 October 1975, 8.

⁷³ Michael Wolfers and Jane Bergerol, *Angola in the Frontline* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 30.

⁷⁴ Paulo Jorge, "Resposta célere dos cubanos ao apelo de Agostinho Neto," *Jornal de Notícias* (Lisbon), 14 November 1995, 14.

⁷⁵ "Informe sobre las actividades," 5.

⁷⁶ MINFAR, "Batallón de Tropas Especiales," n.d. CID-FAR; Lucas Molina to Colomé ("Informe del cumplimiento de la misión en Luanda entre los días 4-18.11.75") [Report on the mission in Luanda on 4-18 November 1975], n.d., 7, CID-FAR; "Resumen de los cables recibidos. Noviembre 75" [Summary of the cables received], entry of 9 November 1975, CID-FAR. The Cuban planes, two aging Britannias, refuelled twice en route to Luanda.

⁷⁷ Du Preez, *Aventuur*, 142.

⁷⁸ Quotations from *Cape Times*, 21 November 1975, 1, and Spies, *Operasie Savannah*, 108.

⁷⁹ See Westad article in this *Bulletin*.

⁸⁰ See "Informe sobre la visita realizada por el mayor Rodobaldo Díaz Padraga a Angola en los días del 16.11.75 al 26.11.75 (Frente sur)" [Report on the visit to Angola by Major Rodobaldo Díaz Padraga on 16-26 November 1975 (Southern front)], n.d., CID-FAR; Lucas Molina to Colomé ("Informe del cumplimiento de la misión en Luanda entre los días 4-18.11.75 [Report on

the mission to Angola on November 4-18]"), n.d., CID-FAR; Raúl Pérez Millares and Eliseo Matos Andreu (representatives of Cubana de Aviación in Barbados) to Olivio, 17 December 1975, CID-FAR; González Bellester, "Estudio de la colaboración," 12-13. On the U.S. campaign to close airports for the Cuban airlift, see the following documents, all in FOIA collection, National Security Archive: U.S. Embassy Port of Spain to SecState, 19 December 1975; Kissinger to U.S. Embassy Georgetown, 20 December 1975; SecState to all American Republic Diplomatic Posts, 20 December 1975; Kissinger to U.S. Embassy Georgetown, 24 December 1975; Kissinger to U.S. Embassy Lisbon, 22 December 1975; and U.S. Embassy Lisbon to SecState, 8 January 1976, FOIA, MF 8904623 S.1. The fact that the Cubans were in charge was well reported in the Western press: see, e.g., *Economist*, 27 December 1975, 26; *Daily Telegraph*, 19 December 1975, 4; *Le Monde*, 18 January 1976, 1; *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1976, 9; *Washington Post*, 10 March 1976, 15.

⁸¹ MINFAR "Conversación con el embajador soviético," 6 January 1976, CID-FAR; Gustavo Chui (deputy chief of the Puesto de Mando de Angola in the EMG) to Comandante de Brigada Rogelio Acevedo, 9 January 1976, CID-FAR; Raúl Castro to Severo Aguirre, 31 January 1976, CID-FAR.

⁸² Interview with Risquet.

⁸³ See Chui (Subjefe del Puesto de Mando de Angola en el EMG) to Cde Juan Escalona (Jefe del Puesto de Mando), 30 January 1976, CID-FAR.

⁸⁴ See Glejjeses, "Cuba's First Venture," 174.

⁸⁵ See CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, weekly reports, "The Situation in the Congo," 10 March 1965, 5-6, 31 March 1965, 4, and 14 April 1965, 4, all in National Security File Country File: Congo, box 87, LBJL; CIA, Office of Current Intelligence, "Tanzanian Support for the Congo Rebels," 7 April 1965, 4, *ibid*.

⁸⁶ Hughes to SecState, "Che Guevara's African Venture," 19 April 1965, 1-2, National Security File Country File: Cuba, box 20, LBJL.

⁸⁷ Interview with Turpin.

⁸⁸ Ford, quoted in *New York Times*, 11 February 1976, 1. According to press reports, Kissinger believed that the Cubans had intervened on their own initiative, but he chose the politically more rewarding course of claiming that Cuba "was acting merely as the 'client state' of the Soviet Union." (*New York Times*, 5 February 1976, 12.) See also Kissinger's 29 January 1976 testimony in US Senate, *Angola*, 6-55, quotation on 8.

⁸⁹ *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 362. See also Arkady Shevchenko, *Breaking With Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 271-72; Yuri Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance: 1959-1991* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

⁹⁰ Pastor to Brzezinski, 21 September 1979, White House Central File, box CO-21, Jimmy Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia. Carter called Castro "a Soviet puppet"; Brzezinski dismissed the Cubans as "proxy military forces" and CIA director Stansfield Turner blithely spoke of "Cuban mercenaries." See Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam

Books, 1982), 479; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983), 56, 146, 187; and Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1985), 86, 92.

⁹¹ George Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* (New York: Norton, 1982), 374. Cuba's role in Shaba and the Horn go beyond the scope of this essay. For Cuba and Shaba, see Piero Gleijeses, "Truth or Credibility: Castro, Carter and the Invasions of Shaba," *International History Review*, February 1996, 70-103.

⁹² The 686 men of the Grupo Especial de Instrucción (GEI) arrived in Algeria aboard two special flights of *Cubana de aviación* that left Havana on October 21, and on two ships, the *Aracelio Iglesias* and the *Andrés González Lines*, which reached Oran on October 22 and 29 respectively. Efigenio Ameijeiras was the commander of the GEI.

⁹³ In this article the ellipsis is used to indicate author's editing. Any sanitized words or sentences are clearly indicated as such.

⁹⁴ On 3 December 1975, Risquet flew to Angola as head of the Cuban Mission in Luanda. As such, he was above the ambassador (Oscar Oramas) and at the same level as the chief of the MMCA.

⁹⁵ "Because of the growing scope of our help to the MPLA," on 25 November 1975 the first vice-minister of the armed forces, Abelardo Colomé Ibarra, had flown from Cuba to Angola to become the head of the MMCA. ("Síntesis," 23-24.)

⁹⁶ Oscar Oramas, a senior foreign ministry official and former ambassador to Guinea Conakry (1966-73), had arrived in December 1975 to serve as Cuba's first ambassador to Angola.

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CASTRO'S TRIP TO AFRICA

continued from page 8

fuegos, Raul Valdez Vivo, Jose Abrantes [*Honecker welcomes Castro, invites him to take the floor—ed.*]

Fidel Castro: [sections omitted—ed.]

We visited Tanzania because of an old commitment. We have built three schools there, sent a medical brigade, and given help in other ways. Nyerere had invited us to talk about economic matters above all. The rise in oil prices had affected Tanzania tremendously. Tanzania needs 800,000 tons of oil a year. The entire harvest of peanut, sisal and cotton crops has to be used for the purchase of oil. The Chinese are still present in Tanzania. They have built a few things there, in particular the railroad. The armed units of the ZANU are trained by the Chinese. Tanzania also carries some responsibility for the split of the liberation movement of Zimbabwe into ZANU and ZAPU. In South Africa armed fighting has begun.

The ANC fighters are trained in Angola. The Chinese had also offered training here. Tanzania considers the developments in Zimbabwe in terms of prestige. [Its involvement] allows it to negotiate with Great Britain and the United States over Zimbabwe and to define a role for itself.

The ZANU has 5000 men in fighting units trained by the Chinese. The liberation fighters in Namibia are also trained in Angola, however. Cuba and the Soviet Union have both set up training camps for this purpose. The ZAPU is supported by Angola.

We flew directly from Tanzania to Mozambique. There used to be differences between us and the FRELIMO, going back to the times when FRELIMO was in Tanzania and Che Guevara had spoken to [Mozambique Liberation Front head Eduardo] Mondlane there. At the time Mondlane did not agree with Che and said so publicly. Thereafter news articles against Mondlane were published in Cuba. Later Mondlane corrected himself, but only internally and things remained somewhat up in the air. FRELIMO took good positions during the liberation struggle in Angola. But in our opinion they were not sufficiently combative. For a time FRELIMO got close to [Tanzanian President Julius] Nyerere. [Cuban Vice President] Carlos Rafael [Rodríguez] had spoken to [Mozambican President] Samora Machel in Colombo, Sri

Lanka, at the Nonaligned Summit Conference in August 1976]. After that we sent a Cuban delegation to Mozambique and I was invited to visit. FRELIMO accepted all of our suggestions for the visit. It was kept discreet, which was convenient for me. Samora Machel was really a surprise for me. I learned to know him as an intelligent revolutionary who took clear positions and had a good relationship with the masses. He really impressed me. We spoke with each other for one and a half days. We support Mozambique. Machel asked us to send 300 technicians. He was interested in Cuba's experiences, especially economic ones. Before this we did not know for sure what influence the Chinese had on him. Now he is getting closer to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. He got a loan from the Soviets for weapons of 100 million rubles. In particular, the Soviets deliver aircraft and anti-aircraft batteries. We were very pleased with our visit to Mozambique. I want to say that we consider this very important.

[Zambian President Kenneth] Kaunda also wanted me to visit him. I had been in Africa for a long time, however, and did not want to extend my stay. Besides which the imperialist penetration has advanced far in Zambia. In the Angola matter, Zambia took a very wrong position, in spite of the fact that she was not forced to do so. We had agreed with Angola not to visit Zambia. A few days before my visit to southern Africa the Katanga [Shaba] battles had begun and [People's Republic of the Congo President Marien] N'Gouabi was murdered. I had been invited to Madagascar, but did not want to stay in Africa any longer. During a press conference in Dar Es Salaam I had categorically denied that Cuba was in any way involved in the Katanga battles. I explained that the situation in Angola was different from those in Zimbabwe and Namibia. I had answered all questions in very general terms.

Things are going well in Angola. They achieved good progress in their first year of independence. There's been a lot of building and they are developing health facilities. In 1976 they produced 80,000 tons of coffee. Transportation means are also being developed. Currently between 200,000 and 400,000 tons of coffee are still in warehouses. In our talks with [Angolan President Agostinho] Neto we stressed the absolute necessity of achieving a level of economic development comparable to what had

existed under [Portuguese] colonialism. Over 300 Cubans are working in the health system. Fishing is recovering and the sugar plantations are almost all back in production. The reconstruction of the transport system is to be completed within 6 months. In education a lot is being done as well. The MPLA [Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola] is doing a good job with mass organizing. Women are politically very active. There are no grounds for dissatisfaction there. Angola has good hard currency earnings. Oil revenues are about 500 million dollars a year, without them having to do anything. They also generate about 300 million from coffee. Now they are setting up a Party in Angola. The fundamental decisions in domestic and foreign policy are correct. We are still concerned about one area: the development of the Army. The Defense Ministry is doing hardly anything to fight bandits in the north and south of the country. The bands are particularly active in the center of the country. With our help they could deliver heavy blows against them. The Soviet military advisors are active at the highest levels. Our advisers are active at the Brigade level and we are helping them with the training of military cadres and the fight against the bandits. The Angolan Defense Ministry underestimates the fight against the bandits [and] they are not deploying regular troops against the bandits. We understand that the Soviet military advisers are primarily requested to help them to organize the regular army and are not interested in helping in the fight against bandits. It is difficult for us to fight against the bandits on our own. Our comrades have had a lot of difficulties and have spent many bitter hours fighting them. The Cubans cannot do it alone. The state of the army unsettles us. In one region a brigade has been without a commander or chief of staff for a long time. Until now the Cuban units have been the only ones fighting the bandits. The major share must however be carried out by the Angolans themselves. The Cuban troops are above all concentrated in Cabinda and in the defense of the capital, Luanda. I spoke with Neto about the situation of the army and told him that things had to change. The Defense Minister [Cdr. Iko Teles Carreira—ed.] is a good old fighter with the MPLA, but that hasn't helped. An army general staff does not really exist. The country may have 70,000 men under arms but the army is prac-

tically not organized. The Soviet advisers are primarily concerned with planning. Neto wanted us to take the entire army in hand. In practical terms that might have been the best solution, but not politically. The Soviet Union is the chief weapons supplier and the Angolans must speak directly to the Soviets. Neto himself must solve these problems. We also cannot commit our troops to the fight against bandits because women and children are being killed in these battles and we cannot take on such a responsibility.

Neto made a very good impression. He is an outstanding personality, very clever and decisive. He is increasingly the leading figure in the Angolan leadership. There are also opportunists in Angola, however. Sometimes they try to approach us or the Soviets and to spread certain opinions. We are very clearly taking a line in favor of Agostinho Neto. There is also evidence of black racism in Angola. Some are using the hatred against the colonial masters for negative purposes. There are many mulattos and whites in Angola. Unfortunately, racist feelings are spreading very quickly. Neto has taken a balanced position here, naming both whites and mulattos as ministers. Neto is of course ready to contribute to this question decisively. He is open to suggestions and arguments. The Defense Minister is not as strong. He does not have high standards. Because of this a lot of cadres do not have the right attitudes. There are cases in which the military commanders have not visited their military district for five months. Many ministers were appointed because they were old war comrades of Neto's. A fact remains: the army and general staff are not working properly. Cadres overall are being developed well throughout Angola, but the Army is the most important. Things are going well, with the exception of the army.

We are giving Angola a great deal of military support. At the end of the liberation war, 36,000 Cuban troops and 300 tanks were deployed. The South African mercenaries were quickly demoralized. The USA talks about 12,000 Cuban soldiers. We are reducing our troop strength continuously. This year we plan to leave 15,000 men stationed there. By the end of 1978 there should be only 7,000, although it's probable that the reductions won't proceed quite as rapidly. The main force is stationed in the south. If the Cuban military were not deployed in Angola the situation would be a lot more

complicated.

The number of our civilian advisers and experts will rise to 4,000 this year. Until now this aid has been provided free of charge. Starting in 1977, however, Angola is committed to paying for the living expenses of our specialists, with an additional increase in financial responsibilities scheduled for 1978. Our military aid will remain free of charge. The Soviet Union has committed itself to supplying the entire material needs of the Angolan and our units.

While in Angola I also dealt with the question of the liberation movements in Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Namibia's liberation fighters are good, they are also helping Angola with the anti-bandit battles. The South African ANC is a serious organization. Its president, Oliver Tambo, is a serious politician. Three quarters of the ANC Central Committee membership is communist. They have a very clear political position with regards to Angola, the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries. The people have taken up the struggle in South Africa, in time the ANC will be a serious power.

The situation is most complicated in Zimbabwe. The ZANU have 1,000 armed fighters. The Chinese and Nyerere are influential with the ZANU. The ZAPU, however, haven't had any military forces of their own. The best man in the ZAPU, General Secretary [Jason] Moyo, was murdered [in Zambia in January 1977]. During the Angolan war of liberation, the Angolan leadership could not give its support to the liberation movement in Zimbabwe. At the time Mozambique was leaning against Tanzania and supported the ZANU. Today things are different. Angola's influence is increasing and Mozambique is growing closer and closer to Angola. The Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe is made up of both the ZANU and the ZAPU, but this is only a formality. [ZAPU leader Joshua] Nkomo is supported by Angola, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. [ZANU leader Robert] Mugabe is supported by Tanzania and the Chinese. Now there are possibilities for depriving the Chinese and the Tanzanians of their influence in Zimbabwe. Zambia is supporting the Zimbabwean liberation movement for the prestige factor that's involved and because it wants to counteract Angola's influence with Nkomo. With the positive development of Angola and Mozambique

the prospects of the liberation movement in Zimbabwe can only improve. It is possible that Angola, Mozambique and Zambia will move forward together. The ZAPU must establish its own armed forces as soon as possible. There are today 6,000 ZAPU men in Angola, and one could make an Army out of them. That would facilitate uniting the ZAPU and the ZANU. I told Neto about this and he agreed. Above all that would be a way to roll back China's influence. Nkomo also understands this. He is very intelligent and talks to Samora Machel a great deal. Unfortunately he is very fat, and so his health is not good.

I told him and others that the personal safety of all the liberation leaders was in danger. The imperialists would be moved to try and murder them all. They've already murdered N'Gouabi and Moyo. Because of this it is absolutely necessary to take steps to increase security measures for the leaders.

The liberation struggle in Africa has a great future. From a historical perspective the facts are that the imperialists cannot turn things back. The liberation struggle is the most moral thing in existence. If the socialist states take the right positions, they could gain a lot of influence. Here is where we can strike heavy blows against the imperialists. The liberation army in Katanga [Shaba] is led by a general. These people used to favor Katanga's secession from Zaire. Later they went to Angola, were trained by the Portuguese and fought against the MPLA, until they went over to Neto's side; now they could not fall out with Neto. They are good soldiers. Its military leader is a general in the gendarmerie who now wants to make a revolution in Zaire. These people are now saying that they are good Marxist-Leninists and that they no longer advocate the secession of Katanga. They went off in four different directions with four battalions. We didn't know about this, and we think that the Angolans didn't either. The frontline states were split 50/50 in favor of supporting the Katanga liberation movement. We gave them a categorical explanation that Cuba was in no way involved in this. The armed groups are marching forward. Their commander sends an open [public] daily telegram to the Angolan leadership and to the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Luanda describing his advances and asking for support. The Yankees are wavering.

They know very well that there are no Cuban units involved. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez is charged with speaking to the French and Belgian ambassadors to protest against their countries' involvement and to pressure them to stop. We want them to be worried, so when they are organizing their mercenaries, and to think that our troops are very near.

Angola has a certain moral duty, and a desire, to support the Katanga liberation movement. They also desire it because the Angolan leadership is angered by [Zairian leader] Mobutu [Sese Seko]'s behavior. Angola has asked us and the Soviets to give them weapons for delivery to the Katangans. We should wait for developments, however. Mobutu is an incompetent and weak politician. It's possible that he will not survive this crisis. The frontline states are now in favor of supporting Katanga, while Angola favors direct aid. We don't want to be involved in order not to give the USA an excuse to intervene. As I mentioned we will try to put pressure on Belgium and France.

It will be a great event if Mobutu falls.

In the People's Republic of the Congo there is a confusing situation following N'Gouabi's murder. The interior and defense ministers are competing for the leadership. There are also pro-Westerners in the military council. It is practically certain that the rightists murdered N'Gouabi. But the left wing was also dissatisfied with him as well. In other words there was a relatively uncertain situation there. We sent Comrade Almeyda to the funeral, and hope that the situation will stabilize. We were also asked to send a military unit to Brazzaville. The internal problems of the country must be solved by the Congolese themselves however. We have stationed a small military unit in Pointe Noire, and another one in Cabinda.

There were several requests for military aid from various sides: [Libyan leader Moammar] Qaddafi, Mengistu, and the Congolese leaders. During our stay in Africa we sent Carlos Rafael Rodriguez to Moscow to confer with our Soviet comrades and to Havana for consultations with our leadership. In order to find the best solution we must think through this question quietly and thoroughly and consider it in terms of the overall situation of the socialist camp. Above all we must do something for Mengistu...[section on Ethiopia printed in "Horn of Africa Crisis" section—ed.]...With regard to military aid for the PR Congo and

the Libyans we have not yet come to a decision.

I had consultations with [Houari] Boumedienne in Algeria and asked for his opinion. He assured me that Algeria would never abandon Libya. Algeria is very concerned with the situation in the Mediterranean because of its security interests. It is in favor of supporting Libya, as long as military aid is confined to the socialist camp. That is not only a question between Cuba and Algeria. If we are to succeed in strengthening the revolution in Libya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, the PDRY [People's Democratic Republic of Yemen] and Angola we must have an integrated strategy for the whole African continent.

Angola is becoming closer to the socialist camp. It bought 1.5 billion rubles of weapons from the Soviets. Boumedienne thinks that [Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat is totally lost to us. In Syria there is also no leftist movement any more, especially after the Syrians defeated the progressive powers and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] in Lebanon.

[Indian President] Indira Gandhi gambled away the elections.

In Africa we can inflict a severe defeat on the entire reactionary imperialist policy. We can free Africa from the influence of the USA and of the Chinese. The developments in Zaire are also very important. Libya and Algeria have large territories, Ethiopia has a great revolutionary potential. So there is a great counterweight to Sadat's betrayal in Egypt. It is even possible that Sadat will be turned around and that the imperialist influence in the Middle East can be turned back.

This must all be discussed with the Soviet Union. We follow its policies and its example.

We estimate that Libya's request is an expression of trust. One should not reject their request. Cuba cannot help it alone. [subsequent sections omitted—ed.]

[Source: Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv" (Berlin), DY30 JIV 2/201/1292; document obtained by Christian F. Ostermann (National Security Archive); translated for Carter-Brezhnev Project by David Welch with revisions by Ostermann; copy on file at National Security Archive.]

Moscow and the Angolan Crisis, 1974-1976: A New Pattern of Intervention

by Odd Arne Westad¹

For a period of roughly twenty years—from the formation of the Cuban-Soviet alliance in the early 1960s until the Red Army got bogged down in the valleys of Afghanistan in the early 1980s—the Soviet Union was an interventionist power with global aspirations. The peak of Soviet interventionism outside Eastern Europe was in the mid- and late 1970s, and coincided roughly with the rise of detente and the effects of the American defeat in Vietnam. This period witnessed significant efforts by Moscow to expand its power abroad, especially in the Middle East, around the Indian Ocean, and in Southern Africa. But it was also a period in which the traditional cautiousness of Soviet Third World diplomacy was cast away at a peril: By the mid-1980s, many Russians had started to question the costs of the Kremlin's imperial ambitions.²

What was behind the new Soviet interventionism of the 1970s? Which perceptions and motives led Soviet leaders to involve themselves deeply into the affairs of countries outside Europe or their immediate border areas? As the doors to the archives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) open, albeit slowly, we are getting new insights into the old problems of Moscow's foreign policy behavior through CPSU documents on a multitude of international crises. This article attempts to address some of the issues relating to Soviet interventions by revisiting one of the main African conflicts of the 1970s: the 1975-76 Angolan civil war.

In the dominant realist interpretation of international relations, the Soviet elite is seen primarily as pursuing a set of interests on the international arena. The primary interest of the elite is the preservation of the Soviet state—an interest which in foreign policy leads to caution at most times, and expansion when possible.³

Was it the *possibilities* for expansion within the world system of states which prompted Moscow's involvement in Africa and Asia? Some analysts, such as Francis Fukuyama, have argued that it was the U.S. foreign policy of detente and the defeat in Vietnam which more than anything else paved the way for Soviet expansionism. Recent memoirs and Moscow's own declassified documents lend support to this view by showing that the mid-70s was the high-point of a wave of optimism in Soviet foreign policy—"the world," according to one former senior official, "was turning in our direction."⁴

Other scholars have concentrated on the immense expansion of Soviet military and infrastructural capabilities during the late 1960s as a cause for Soviet involvement in the Third World. This instrumental explanation emphasizes in particular the growth of the Soviet navy, the development of a large fleet of long-distance transport planes, enlarged training facilities, and improvements in global communications.⁵

Analysts have also pointed to changes in leadership and political or institutional conflicts within the Soviet elite. Samuel Huntington suggests that each of the Soviet advances into new foreign policy arenas antedated the emergence of a new leader and became part of the new leader's claim to power. Brezhnev is the prototype for such a leader, and the Soviet policy changes in the 1970s must then be seen as part of Brezhnev's international agenda. Parallel with Brezhnev's rise to power, the International Department (*Mezhdunarodnyi otdel* or MO) of the CPSU Central Committee (CC) strengthened its position as a maker of Soviet foreign policy at the expense of the Foreign Ministry, and, while the Ministry was preoccupied with the traditional arenas for Soviet foreign policy—Europe and the United States—the MO increasingly emphasized the Third World.⁶

There are, in particular, two aspects of the Soviet materials on the Angolan civil war which point away from explanations generally offered by realist scholars. First, there is the issue of the nature and importance of ideology in Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet officials who designed the intervention in Southern Africa were driven by ideas of promoting their model of development abroad. Their early contacts with the Angolan left-wing rebels had shown them that the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola or MPLA) was a likely adherent to Soviet ideas of state and society. As the Angolan group came under pressure from its enemies, many Soviet officials used opportunity, capability, and strategic interest as rationalizations of a desire to uphold a regime willing to link up to the Soviet experience.

Second, there is the ability of Soviet allies—in this case the Angolans and the Cubans—to influence Moscow's actions. Luanda and especially Havana pushed successfully for Moscow's involvement in the civil war, both demonstrating leverage far in excess of their putative "power." In 1975, Fidel Castro initiated Cuban armed support for the MPLA without Moscow's agreement or knowledge, and thereby reduced the Soviet leaders' role for several crucial months to that of spectators to a war in which the Cubans and their Angolan allies gambled on prospective Soviet support to win. Although it certainly was the direction of Soviet foreign policy itself which poised Moscow for its Angolan adventure, it was Castro and MPLA President Agostinho Neto who conditioned and shaped the intervention.

The main foreign policy aim for Soviet involvement in Africa was to score a series of inexpensive victories in what was perceived as a global contest with Washington for influence and positions in the Third World. Political theory—Marxism-Leninism—did play

a role in selecting who should be the Soviet allies in the area, and the large deposits of mineral resources in Southern Africa also played a role (primarily in terms of denying these resources to the US and its allies), but these were subsidiary parts of the equation.

As the Moscow leadership developed its links with the liberation movements, it created African expectations of further support as well as a sense of commitment in its own ranks. This sense of commitment was particularly strong among the cadre of the CPSU CC International Department that handled most of the contacts with African organizations. In addition, the Cuban leadership—who had been involved in African affairs since the mid-1960s⁷—viewed the early Soviet involvement as a harbinger of a much wider East-bloc engagement on the continent.

Still, a larger Soviet operation in black Africa was slow in coming. Moscow's ideologically inspired attempts to influence the policies of the local revolutionary movements complicated the building of stable alliances with these groups, and often frustrated Soviet foreign policy aims. The links which the Soviets—often wrongly—assumed existed between many African militants and the People's Republic of China contributed to Moscow's caution. It was not until the Soviet and Cuban leaders agreed on their military

plans in Angola in late 1975 that the Soviet Union finally made a major investment in one of its Southern African alliances, and thereby made the MPLA a regional ally second in importance only to the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa.

The "African strategy" was developed by the KGB and received the support of the Soviet leadership—and Brezhnev—in the summer and fall of 1970. The KGB reports emphasized that the regimes and liberation movements of Southern Africa were searching for international allies, and underlined the "simplistic" approach most African regimes had to world affairs, understanding neither the conflict between the two camps nor the nature of American imperialism. The black political leaders of Southern Africa felt that their efforts to gain aid from Washington had failed, and that the Soviet Union was the only major power which could assist them in reaching their political and social goals.⁸

The Portuguese colonies—Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde—were particularly interesting from a Soviet point of view both for political and strategic reasons. The KGB noted the Nixon Administration's renewed alliance with Portugal, and the recent military setbacks for the colonial forces in their war against the liberation movements. KGB Deputy Chairman Viktor Chebrikov explained that

especially Angola and Guinea-Bissau had great potential strategic importance for the Soviet Union, and that both the United States and China were trying to increase their influence with the liberation movements in these countries.⁹

The intelligence organizations saw Soviet rivalry with Beijing over influence in Africa as a major element behind their policy recommendations. The main military intelligence bureau—the GRU—reported that China was targeting countries and movements which already received aid from the Soviet Union. China, the GRU stressed, would use its resources to the maximum to attract African supporters, and could, within a few years, build its position sufficiently to control large parts of Africa in a loose coalition with the United States.¹⁰

KGB chairman Yuri Andropov also had other reasons for recommending an increase in Soviet involvement in Southern Africa. Summarizing a report on Western estimates of Soviet policy in Africa, Andropov stressed that Western experts believe that although the Soviet Union will strive to strengthen its position in Africa, "in the coming years [it does] not plan a 'broad offensive'," limiting itself to "securing positions [already] achieved." These Western estimates, Andropov found, were by themselves good reasons why the Soviet Union should step up its African operations.¹¹

The new emphasis on Africa in Soviet foreign policy was immediately put into practice in the case of Angola. After a number of unsuccessful MPLA appeals for increased support in the spring of 1970, Agostinho Neto was startled by the scale and scope of what the Soviets offered in mid-July. Soviet ambassador to Zambia D. Z. Belokolos proposed a series of plans for Moscow to assist the MPLA in terms of military hardware, logistical support, and political training. In addition, the Soviets were willing to send military advisers and offer political support for Neto's movement in its conflicts with the neighboring African states: Zambia, Zaire, and Congo.¹²

The MPLA leadership responded avidly to this Soviet largesse. In his

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meetings with Belokolos, Neto downplayed MPLA relations with “capitalist countries and social-democratic parties,” and stressed that the Soviet Union was the party’s main international ally. Neto especially wanted the Soviets to know that he saw no grounds for working closely with China. The Soviet ambassador, in his communications to Moscow, believed that the MPLA leadership’s positions reflected the general sentiment in the movement—that the Soviet Union was their only likely source of major military support.¹³

In spite of their new-found enthusiasm for African affairs, the Soviet leaders in the 1971-73 period found it increasingly difficult to work out effective ways of collaborating with their favored Southern African liberation movements, and particularly with the MPLA. The Soviets found that Neto’s movement had more than its fair share of the poor communications, bad organization, and widespread factionalism which, as seen from Moscow, characterized all the liberation movements in Southern Africa—with the possible exception of Moscow’s favorite partner, the ANC.¹⁴

By early 1974, the MPLA had split into three factions: the Tanzania-based leadership under Agostinho Neto, the Zambia-supported group of Daniel Chipenda (known as *Revolta do Leste* [Eastern Revolt]), and a Congo-based faction calling itself *Revolta Activa* (Active Revolt). As John Marcum points out, the discord was not so much due to doctrinal differences as “faulty communication, military reverses, and competing ambitions.” The MPLA had never, even at the best of times, been especially well-organized or cohesive, and pressure from Portuguese counter-offensives, ethnic tensions, and challenges to Neto’s leadership split the movement. Chipenda, typically, drew most of his support from his own Ovimbundu ethnic group in the central and eastern parts of Angola.¹⁵

The Soviet envoys spent much time and effort trying to restore unity to the MPLA and create some kind of liberation front between it and the main traditionalist independence movement,

Holden Roberto’s *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA). The Soviets held on to Neto as their main Angolan connection, assuring a trickle of military and financial support for the besieged leadership. More importantly, Moscow invited an increasing number of Neto’s associates to the Soviet Union for military and political training. Still, the Soviets also gave some assistance to Chipenda’s group, and continued to invite Chipenda for “confidential” conversations at their Lusaka embassy up to 1974.¹⁶

As Soviet criticism of Neto’s lack of flexibility in the unity talks mounted, their support for his movement gradually declined. In March 1974, just a month before the Lisbon military coup suddenly threw the political situation in Angola wide open, the Soviet ambassador in Brazzaville drew a bleak picture of the situation in the MPLA. For all practical purposes the movement had stopped functioning, and there was little hope of Neto bringing it together again. The only bright spot was the existence within the MPLA of a number of “progressively oriented activists” who wanted close relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁷

The April 1974 overthrow of the Caetano regime by a group of radical Portuguese officers sent Soviet Africa policy into high gear. By May, Moscow was already convinced that the Portuguese colonial empire would soon collapse. Concerning Angola, the Soviet policy was to strengthen the MPLA under Neto’s leadership, thereby making the movement the dominant partner in a post-colonial coalition government. Disregarding previous reports on the situation in the MPLA, the CPSU International Department and the Moscow Foreign Ministry instructed Soviet embassies in Brazzaville, Lusaka, and Dar-es-Salaam to “repair” the damaged liberation movement.¹⁸

This salvage operation turned out to be exceedingly difficult. The MPLA factions’ views of each other did not change much with the waning of Portuguese power. The Soviet ambassadors tried their best in meetings with Neto, José Eduardo dos Santos, Chipenda, and other MPLA leaders—

promising substantial Soviet support to a united MPLA—but to little avail. The “unification congress,” held near Lusaka in mid-August, broke down when Neto’s supporters walked out of what they considered a staged attempt to remove the party leadership.¹⁹

In the meantime, the MPLA’s rivals had substantially strengthened their positions in Angola. Roberto’s FNLA, having received supplies, weapons, and instructors from China, moved its troops across the northern border from Zaire and started operations in the northern provinces. The youngest of the liberation movements, Jonas Savimbi’s *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), signed a ceasefire with the Portuguese in June and started recruiting large numbers of Angolans for military training in their base areas in the east. In spite of its diplomatic efforts, the Soviet Union seemed to be losing out in the battle for influence in post-colonial Angola.²⁰

In October the Soviets decided to drop the idea of forcing the MPLA factions to unite, and threw their weight squarely behind Neto’s group. According to what ambassador Afanasenko told José Eduardo dos Santos, there were two main reasons behind this decision. First, Neto had in late September managed to convene a rump congress inside Angola, in which the main MPLA guerrilla commanders took part. The political manifesto passed by the congress was to the Soviets’ liking. Second, the new head of the Portuguese military administration in Angola, Admiral Rosa Coutinho, was a left-winger who openly sympathized with Neto’s views. But however Afanasenko presented the Soviet views, Neto’s people must have been aware that if Moscow wanted to maintain some influence in Angola, it had little choice but to support the “reconstructed” MPLA.²¹

The events of the two last months of 1974 seemed to indicate that Moscow had made the right move. On October 21, the MPLA signed a cease-fire with Portugal, and on November 6, large crowds greeted the MPLA veteran Lucio Lara when he arrived to open an office in Luanda. About the same time, forces of the newly organized MPLA

military wing—the FAPLA (*Forças Armadas Popular para Libertação de Angola*)—took control of most of the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda in the north. In the main Angolan cities, MPLA organizers, now free to act, started setting up strong para-military groups in populous slum areas, drawing on the appeal of their message of social revolution.²²

Moscow in early December 1974 drew up an elaborate plan for supplying the MPLA with heavy weapons and large amounts of ammunition, using Congo (Brazzaville) as the point of transit. Ambassador Afanassenko got the task of convincing the Congolese of their interest in cooperating. This was not an easy task. Congo had never been a close ally of the Soviet Union—in the ruling military junta were many who sympathized with the Chinese—and it had for some time sponsored both Neto's MPLA rivals and a Cabinda separatist group. The latter issue was particularly problematic, and Agostinho Neto had on several occasions criticized the Congolese leader Colonel Marien Nguabi for his support of Cabindan independence. Still, on December 4 Nguabi gave his go-ahead for the Soviet operation.²³

Though noting the flexibility of the Congolese government, Afanassenko knew that the job of reinforcing the MPLA would not be easy. In a report to Moscow he underlined the problems the MPLA faced on the military side. Both the FNLA, now joined by Daniel Chipenda's MPLA rebels, and UNITA held strong positions and would be equipped further by the Americans and the Chinese. In the civil war which the ambassador predicted, the "reactionaries" would initially have the initiative, and the MPLA would depend on "material assistance from progressive countries all over the world" just to survive. Politically, however, Neto's group, as the "most progressive national-liberation organization of Angola," would enjoy considerable support. On the organizational side, one should not think of the MPLA as a vanguard party, or even as a party at all, but rather as a loose coalition of trade unionists, progressive intellectuals, Christian groups,

and large segments of the petty bourgeoisie.²⁴

In spite of the skirmishes which had already begun between MPLA and FNLA forces in late 1974, African heads of state succeeded in convincing the three Angolan movements to join in negotiations with Portugal and thereby attempt an orderly transfer of power in Luanda. These negotiations led to the 15 January 1975 Alvor Agreement, in which 11 November 1975 was set as the date for the Portuguese handing over power to an Angolan coalition government. None of the parties took this last attempt at avoiding civil war too seriously, and sporadic fighting continued. The Alvor Agreement was also undermined both by the Soviet Union and the United States, who decided to expand their programs of military support for their Angolan allies.²⁵

The Soviets were prodded in their widening commitment to the MPLA by the Cuban leaders. Cuba had supplied the MPLA with some material support since the mid-1960s, and Havana had increasingly come to regard Agostinho Neto as its favorite African liberation leader. The Cubans told Moscow that Neto would not, and should not, accept sharing power with the other movements. Cuba would itself concentrate more on Africa (i.e., Angola) in its foreign policy, and expected the Soviets to upgrade their support for the MPLA. Moscow would not be bettered by Havana. Afanassenko told the Cuban ambassador to Brazzaville that "the Central Committee of the CPSU is attentively watching the development of events in Angola and reiterates [its] unity with the progressive forces, in order to smash the cherished adventures of foreign and domestic reaction."²⁶

The Soviet Union was also aware of the increase in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's covert support for the FNLA starting in late January 1975. The Soviet embassy in Brazzaville concluded that the American assistance would lead Holden Roberto to make an all-out bid for power very soon. The embassy experts realized that there was little the Soviet Union could do to assist the MPLA resist the initial attacks by Roberto's forces. Their hope was

that the further increase in Soviet "technical, military, and civilian assistance" which the Brazzaville ambassador promised José Eduardo dos Santos on January 30 would arrive in time. But in addition to their material assistance, the Soviets also tried to push the MPLA to mend its negotiation strategy. Moscow now hoped that a new alliance between the MPLA and Savimbi's UNITA could get their Angolan allies out of the difficult spot they were in.²⁷

Moscow was joined in its wish for an anti-FNLA alliance by many of the independent states in southern Africa. Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere attempted to get the Soviets to increase the pressure on the MPLA leadership to make the necessary concessions to forge such an alliance. Nyerere, sympathetic to the MPLA's political aims, was exasperated by Neto's unbending demands in the negotiations. The Angolan leader was "a good poet and doctor," Nyerere told the East German ambassador, but "a bad politician." Nyerere also warned the Soviets against direct involvement in the Angolan conflict. African countries would react sharply against any form of foreign intervention, Nyerere said.²⁸

By early summer, 1975, the FNLA troops had mounted limited offensives against the MPLA both along the coast and in the northern part of Angola. Then, in July, as another African-brokered attempt at negotiations broke down, the MPLA counterattacked. By the middle of the month, local FAPLA forces were in control of Luanda, and MPLA troops began attacking the FNLA strongholds in the north. The Soviets had not foreseen the MPLA military success, although the Brazzaville embassy already in April foresaw an improvement of FAPLA fighting capabilities because of the Soviet aid. However, it did not expect a full scale civil war to break out before Angola achieved its independence in November.²⁹

Moscow now seemed to have the recipe for success in Angola. By a limited supply of military equipment, it had secured the MPLA the upper hand in the fighting. As the date for independence approached, Moscow expected

that the rival movements, or at least UNITA, would return to the negotiating table and become part of an MPLA-led coalition government. The Soviet experts did not believe that the United States would stage a massive intervention, nor did they give much credence to MPLA reports of direct South African or Zairean involvement. Their main worry was the Chinese, who had stepped up their FNLA assistance program from bases in Zaire. Moscow found particularly disturbing the fact that the Chinese were joined as instructors in these camps by military personnel from Romania and North Korea.³⁰

The Ford Administration was, however, not willing to let Neto's MPLA force a solution to the nascent civil war in Angola. In mid-July 1975, the U.S. president authorized a large-scale covert operation in support of the FNLA and the UNITA. Over three months, the CIA was allocated almost \$50 million dollars to train, equip, and transport anti-MPLA troops. In early August, South African forces, at first in limited numbers, crossed the border into southern Angola, while regular Zairean troops joined FNLA forces fighting in the north. By mid-August the MPLA offensives in the north had been turned back, and Neto's forces were retreating toward Luanda.³¹

In addition to its flagging fortunes on the battlefield, the MPLA ran up against increasing problems in securing their Soviet lifeline through the Congo. The flamboyant and independent-minded Congolese leader, Colonel Nguabi, had been angered by Neto's persistent criticism of Brazzaville for sheltering Cabindan separatist groups. In an irate message to the Soviet ambassador, Nguabi informed Moscow that he would no longer accept that Neto, "on the one hand, demands assistance from Congo, [and] on the other makes accusations against us." By early August the Congolese had informed Afanassenko that they would not accept Soviet plans for large-scale support of the MPLA through Congolese territory.³²

It was the threat to the "Congo connection" which, in early August, prompted Moscow to ask Fidel

Castro—who had close connections with the Congolese leaders—to act as a facilitator for assistance to the MPLA. The Soviet leaders got more than they bargained for. The Cubans had since early spring tried to get Moscow to support an armed strategy on behalf of the MPLA. Already in February, the Cuban ambassador to Dar-es-Salaam had told his Soviet colleague that "The choice of the socialist road in Angola must be made now. . . . In October it will be too late." In late summer, Castro used the new Soviet request as a stimulus for launching his own plan for the intervention of Cuban forces in Angola.³³

Cuba had sent military instructors to work with the MPLA in its camps in Congo for several years before the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire. By early summer 1975 these advisers numbered about 250, and—in spite of not participating in combat—they played an increasingly important role in planning MPLA operations. The Cuban officers functioned as a kind of general staff for Neto and the MPLA leaders. Through their operational training, Castro's instructors supplied the necessary know-how which the Angolan forces lacked, especially regarding communications, supply-lines, and coordinated operations.³⁴

On August 15, Castro sent a message to Leonid Brezhnev arguing the need for increased support for the MPLA, including the introduction of Cuban special troops. The Cubans had already developed a fairly detailed plan for transporting their troops to Luanda (or Congo), for supplies, and for how the Cuban soldiers would be used on the ground in Angola. Castro wanted Soviet transport assistance, as well as the use of Soviet staff officers, both in Havana and Luanda, to help in planning the military operations. The Cubans underlined to the Soviets the political strength of the MPLA, and the threat which foreign assistance to the FNLA/UNITA alliance posed to socialism and independence in Angola.³⁵

The Cuban initiative was coordinated with the MPLA leaders, who now in turn tried to put pressure on the Soviets to get involved with the Cuban

plan for a direct military intervention. Lucio Lara, the senior MPLA underground leader in Luanda, on August 17 appealed to Ambassador Afanassenko for the dispatch of Soviet staff officers to the MPLA General Command, which had just moved from Brazzaville to Luanda. "The MPLA Command needs qualified advice on military questions at the strategic level," Lara said. Afanassenko, however, could only promise technical experts, but agreed to invite MPLA's defense minister designate, Iko Carreira, to Moscow in late August for talks with the CPSU CC International Department, the Defense Ministry, and the Armed Forces General Staff.³⁶

In spite of their policy to support Neto's MPLA, the Soviet leaders were not pleased with the content of the Cuban plan. First of all, they objected to the use of Soviet officers and even Soviet transport planes in Angola prior to independence. The Soviet leaders worried that such a move would damage the policy of detente with regard to the United States. They also knew that most African countries, including some close to the Soviet Union, would react against a direct Soviet involvement, as would some of their political friends in Portugal. Second, the Cubans were, in the Soviet view, not sufficiently aware of how even a Cuban intervention could upset great power relations, since the Ford Administration would see Cuban forces as proxies for Soviet interests. Third, Moscow was still not sure that the military situation in Angola warranted a troop intervention in support of the MPLA.³⁷

In spite of their displeasure, the Soviet leaders found it difficult to make their objections known to Castro. Moscow knew that the Cuban leader was wary of the Soviet policy of detente, and their experience with Havana told them to tread carefully so as to avoid episodes like the 1968 near-break between the two allies. Still, Brezhnev flatly refused to transport the Cuban troops or to send Soviet officers to serve with the Cubans in Angola. The Soviet General Staff opposed any participation in the Cuban operation, and even the KGB, with whom the policy of paying increased

attention to Africa originated, in August 1975 warned against the effects of a direct Soviet intervention on US-Soviet relations.³⁸

Havana would not be deterred by Soviet hesitation. The first Cuban combat troops arrived in Luanda in late September and early October onboard several Soviet aircraft and rebuilt pre-revolutionary Cuban cruise-ships. They immediately fanned out into FAPLA units in the Angolan countryside, and took charge of much of the fighting against the MPLA's enemies. But the infusion of Cuban troops was not enough to sustain the MPLA conquests from early summer against the new onslaught of its combined enemies.³⁹

In September the MPLA continued its retreat, hard pressed by Zairean and mercenary-led FNLA troops in the north and UNITA forces, supported by advisors and material from South Africa, in the south. Savimbi's incongruous alliance with Pretoria had given his military units the equipment they badly needed, and they could now exploit their substantial ethnically-based support in central and eastern Angola. The MPLA, meanwhile, was by mid-October entirely dependent on its support in the western Luanda-Mbundu regions and in the cities. It controlled less than one-fourth of the country, and was losing ground, in spite of Cuban reinforcements.⁴⁰

The foreign alliance policies of the MPLA, and thereby its possibilities for winning the struggle for power in Angola, were saved by Pretoria's October decision to launch an invasion. Moscow knew of the South African plans in advance of their implementation in mid-October, and the Kremlin leadership discussed how to respond. The CPSU CC International Department considered the new stage of the anti-MPLA operations in Angola a joint U.S.-South African effort, and believed the Soviet Union had to come to the aid of its ally. In the third week of October, Moscow decided to start assisting the Cuban operation in Angola immediately after the MPLA had made its declaration of independence on November 11. The Soviet aim was to infuse enough Cuban troops and Soviet advis-

ers into Angola by mid-December to defeat the South Africans and assist the MPLA leaders in building a socialist party and state.⁴¹

The Soviet perception of the widening role of the CIA in assisting FNLA forces from bases in Zaire also played a role in Moscow's reevaluation of its Angolan policy. The KGB station in Brazzaville supplied vital information on the dramatic increase in U.S. assistance, and Andropov believed that the Americans had a long-term strategy of equipping large groups of Angolan, Zairean, and Western mercenary troops to be sent into Angola. It was also likely, the KGB said, that U.S. "experts" would increase their own cross-border activities.⁴²

The reaction of most African countries to the South African invasion led the Soviets to believe that it would be less dangerous than before to intervene in the Angolan conflict. Julius Nyerere, an African leader who Moscow respected in spite of his often blunt criticism of its Africa policies, told the Soviet ambassador on November 3 that in spite of deploring the war in Angola, Pretoria's intervention had made outside support for the MPLA necessary. He hoped that many African countries now would aid Neto's movement. Still, he warned against a too open Soviet support for the MPLA, and hoped that Moscow would channel the bulk of its aid through African governments. The Soviet ambassador, untruthfully, responded that such would be the case.⁴³

The Soviet military preparations for the airlift of Cuban troops to Angola intensified in early November. The CPSU secretariat met on November 5 and decided to send Soviet naval units to areas off the Angolan coast. In Brazzaville, in a striking reversal of roles within less than two months, the Soviet ambassador now exhorted his Cuban colleague to "intensify" Havana's preparations for combat in Angola. "But a Cuban artillery regiment is already fighting in Luanda," the Cuban ambassador responded, somewhat incredulously.⁴⁴

Agostinho Neto declared the independence of the People's Republic of Angola on November 11, just as the

MPLA was fighting for its very existence only a few miles north of Luanda. In the battle of Quifangondo valley the Cuban artillerymen proved to give FAPLA the crucial advantage over its FNLA-Zairean opponents. Soviet-supplied BM-21 122 millimeter rocket launchers devastated the attacking forces and sent them on a disorderly retreat toward the northern border, giving the MPLA and the Cubans a free hand to turn on the South African and UNITA forces approaching from the south.⁴⁵

During the week before independence, large groups of Cuban soldiers had started arriving in Luanda onboard Soviet aircraft. The Soviets had organized and equipped these transports, although the operation was technically directed by the Cubans themselves. Moscow had made it clear that the primary objective of these forces was to contain the South Africans along the southern border and that they should not be used for general purposes in the civil war. For the same reason the Soviet General Staff ordered about 60 of their own officers to join the Cuban forces from Congo. These men started arriving in Luanda in the evening of November 12.⁴⁶

The ensuing two weeks saw the rapid advance toward Luanda of the UNITA army led by about 6,000 regular South African troops. By late November, these forces had reconquered all the territory which Savimbi had lost to the MPLA over the preceding months. They had occupied every major port south of the capital except Porto Amboim, taken control of the Benguela railway, and were attempting to set up their own civilian administration in Huambo. Both the Soviets and the Cubans concluded that if the MPLA regime was to survive, the Cuban forces would have to attack in the south as soon as possible.⁴⁷

After the creation of the MPLA regime the Politburo authorized the Soviet General Staff to take direct control of the trans-Atlantic deployment of additional Cuban troops, as well as the supplying of these troops with advanced military hardware. The massive operation—the first Soviet effort of its kind—

transported more than 12,000 soldiers by sea and air from Cuba to Africa between late October 1975 and mid-January 1976. In the same period it also provided FAPLA and the Cubans with hundreds of tons of heavy arms, as well as T-34 and T-54 tanks, SAM-7s, anti-tank missiles, and a number of MiG-21 fighter planes.⁴⁸

It is still not possible to chart in any detail the logistics of the Soviet operation. What we do know is that the governments of several African countries agreed to assist with the enterprise. Congo was the main staging ground for personnel and arms arriving from Cuba and the Soviet Union (although in some cases An-22 transport planes flew directly from the southern USSR or from Cuba). Algeria, Guinea, Mali, and Tanzania cooperated with the efforts in different ways, even if the Soviets on some occasions had to push hard to get their cooperation. Moscow also had to push some of its East European allies to rush to the defense of "African liberation and global anti-imperialism" by supporting the MPLA.⁴⁹

By the end of November the Cubans had stopped the South African-led advance on Luanda, and in two battles south of the Cuanza river in December the southern invaders suffered major setbacks. Pretoria then decided to withdraw towards the border, partly because of its military problems and partly because the U.S. Senate voted on December 19 to block all funding for covert operations in Angola. Pretoria would not accept being left in the lurch by Washington, with its own men held hostage to a conflict they no longer believed they could win.⁵⁰

Just as it had opened the gates for African acceptance of Soviet-Cuban aid to the MPLA, the by now defunct South African intervention also paved the way for African diplomatic recognition of the new Angolan regime. By mid-February 1976, most African states had officially recognized Neto's government, as had the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in spite of attempts by its chairman, Ugandan President Idi Amin, to have the decision postponed. Soviet diplomatic efforts contributed significantly to this development, for

instance in the case of Zambia, where President Kenneth Kaunda switched over to the MPLA's side after substantial Soviet pressure.⁵¹

In terms of control of the central regions, the Angolan war was over by early March 1976. The capital of the anti-MPLA forces, Huambo, fell to FAPLA forces on February 11. Holden Roberto had already in January returned to exile in Zaire and the FNLA had given up its military activities. Jonas Savimbi had returned to the bush areas of southeastern Angola with about 2,000 guerillas and their U.S. and South African advisers, and although he was to fight his way back to international prominence by the early 1980s, in 1976 Savimbi himself realized that he could not effectively challenge FAPLA and the Cubans.⁵²

In the spring of 1976 the Soviet leaders felt—with a high degree of certainty and self-congratulation—that they had won the Angolan war. The Kremlin was impressed that the logistics of the operation had worked so well: over 7,000 kilometers from Moscow the Soviet Union had conducted a campaign in support of its allies against the power of the United States and its strong regional supporters, and come out on top. For Brezhnev himself Angola became a benchmark for "active solidarity with the peoples of Africa and Asia" and evidence that the Soviet Union could advance socialism in the Third World during a period of detente with the United States.⁵³

What did the Soviets believe they learned from the Angolan conflict? From the reports coming in to the CPSU CC International Department, the most important lesson at the time seems to have been that the United States could be defeated in local conflicts under certain circumstances. First, the Soviet armed forces must be capable of and ready to provide, at short notice, the logistics for the operation needed. These tasks were primarily assigned to the navy and the air-force, both of which were commended for their efforts in Angola. Second, the Soviet Union must be able to organize and control the anti-imperialist forces involved (unlike in Vietnam, where the Soviet leaders felt

that disaster had struck again and again because of the Vietnamese leaders' inability to follow Moscow's advice).⁵⁴

The Soviet cadres in Angola were, by 1976, very satisfied with the way both Angolans and Cubans had respected Moscow's political primacy during the war. According to the embassy, Neto realized his dependence on Soviet assistance and, equally important, that it was Moscow, not Havana, who made the final decisions. Even though the embassy still did not trust Neto fully, they admitted that he had performed to their liking during these battles. In the spring of 1976 he continued to press for more Soviet military instructors, an attitude which the charge d'affaires in Luanda, G.A. Zverev, held up as a sign of the Angolan president's dedication to the new alliance, even if Neto had not yet consented to request permanent Soviet military bases.⁵⁵

As to the Cubans, the Soviet representatives often expressed a certain degree of surprise to Moscow at how harmonious were relations with the small Caribbean ally. The Soviet-Cuban "close coordination in Angola during the war has had very positive results," Zverev told his superiors in March 1976. Soviet diplomats and officers lauded the Cubans for their bravery and for their ability to function as a link between Moscow and Luanda while at the same time "respecting" the paramount role of the CPSU leadership. The overall Cuban-Soviet relationship improved significantly in the wake of the Angolan operation, up to a point which had not been reached since the 1962 missile crisis.⁵⁶

Moscow and Havana also agreed on strategy in Angola after the main battles had ended in the spring of 1976. Both countries wanted to wind down their military involvement as soon as possible, "avoid broad military clashes with South Africa, and attain their goal by means of political and diplomatic struggle." In May, Raul Castro told the Soviet General Staff that he wanted to start withdrawing Cuban troops right away, and that he expected almost 15,000 Cubans to have left by late October. The Cuban leaders asked Moscow to inform Pretoria of their inten-

tions, well knowing that such a demilitarization of the conflict—albeit with a MPLA government in place—was what the Soviets had wanted all along. Havana knew how to placate the great power, although, as we will see below, they exacted their price for doing so.⁵⁷

The second lesson the Soviets believed they had learnt from the Angolan adventure was that the Soviet Union can and must rebuild and reform local anti-capitalist groups in crisis areas. The MPLA, local Soviet observers postulated in 1976, was saved from its own follies by advice and assistance from Moscow, which not only helped it win the war, but also laid the foundation for the building of a “vanguard party.” The Angolan movement had earlier been plagued by “careerists and fellow-travellers,” but, due to Soviet guidance, the “internationalists” were in ascendance. These new leaders—men like Lopo do Nascimento and Nito Alves—understood that the MPLA was part of an international revolutionary movement led by Moscow and that they therefore both then and in the future depended on Soviet support.⁵⁸

It was these “internationalists” who Moscow wanted to assist in building a new MPLA, patterned on the experience of the CPSU. Noting the poor state of the MPLA organization in many areas, the Soviet party-building experts suggested that this was the field in which do Nascimento, Alves, and others should concentrate their activities. By taking the lead in constructing the party organization they would also be the future leaders of the Marxist-Leninist party in Angola.⁵⁹

The Soviets supplied very large amounts of political propaganda to be disseminated among MPLA supporters and used in the training of cadre. The ordinary embassy staff sometimes found the amounts a bit difficult to handle—a plane-load of brochures with Brezhnev’s speech at the 25th CPSU congress, two plane-loads of anti-Maoist literature—but in general the embassy could put the materials to good use (or so they claimed in reports to Moscow). By summer 1976 they had run out of Lenin portraits, and had to request a new supply from the CPSU

Propaganda Department.⁶⁰

The transformation of the MPLA turned out to be an infinitely more difficult task for the Soviets than the dissemination of Lenin busts. Neto’s independence of mind and his claim to be a Marxist theoretician in his own right rankled the Russians and made it increasingly difficult for them to control the MPLA as soon as the military situation stabilized. Some of the Angolan leaders whom Moscow disliked, for instance FAPLA veteran commander and defense minister Iko Carreira and MPLA general secretary Lucio Lara, who was strongly influenced by the European left, strengthened their positions after the war was over. According to the embassy, the influence of such people delayed both the necessary changes in the MPLA and the finalization of the development plans on which the Soviets and Cubans were advising.⁶¹

Differences between the Soviet and Cuban perceptions of the political situation in the MPLA did not make things easier for Moscow. Part of the price which Castro exacted for his general deference to the Soviets on the Angolan issue was the right to argue for Angolan political solutions which were to his liking. Preeminent in Castro’s political equation was the leadership of Agostinho Neto: whom he considered a brilliant man and a great African leader, as well as a personal friend. The Cubans therefore missed no opportunity to impress the Soviets with their view that the MPLA president was the only solution to Angola’s leadership problems, well knowing of Moscow’s suspicions of him. “We have the highest regard for President Neto,” Raúl Castro told Soviet Vice-Minister of Defense I.F. Ponomarenko. “Cuba wants to strengthen Neto’s authority,” the head of the Cuban party’s International Department, Raúl Valdés Vivó, told the Soviet chargé in May.⁶²

The Cubans were, however, always clever at sweetening their tough position in support of Neto by underlining that the Soviet Union of course was Angola’s primary international ally. “Relations with the Soviet Union will become a more important aspect of

Angolan foreign policy in the future,” Raúl Castro told his Soviet colleagues. He instructed Risquet to “on all questions inform the USSR embassy in Angola and maintain close contact with the Soviet comrades.” Castro also castigated some of the Angolan leaders whom the Soviet distrusted; Lucio Lara “displays a certain restraint on questions [of] broadening the collaboration with the socialist countries. He is reserved and not frank . . . [and] has avoided us,” Castro told Ponomarenko.⁶³

But even such measures could not always convince the Soviets of Cuban loyalty. Reporting on Neto’s visit to Havana in July 1976, the Soviet embassy noted with disapproval that Fidel Castro had told the Angolans that Cuban troops would remain in Africa “as long as they are needed,” and that Neto had asked for Cuba’s assistance in building a Marxist-Leninist party. Even worse, Castro had spoken of Angola, Cuba, and Vietnam as “the main anti-imperialist core” of the world. That the Cuban president had also mentioned the “central role” of the Soviet Union was not sufficient to please the Soviet observers, particularly since Castro coupled his statement with an endorsement of Neto’s own “paramount role” in the MPLA.⁶⁴

As Philip Windsor has observed about the Brezhnev Doctrine, the relationship between the Soviet Union and its allies approximated the roles of a king and his vassals in medieval natural law. The Cubans and the Angolans could set their own agenda, so long as they subordinated themselves to the general purpose of Soviet foreign policy and used the proper code of address when reporting to Moscow’s representatives. For Soviet cadre at the local level the real character of the Moscow-Havana-Luanda relationship complicated their efforts at reforming the MPLA, as shown in excess by the spectacle of the May 1977 coup attempt against Neto, when Nito Alves—a Soviet favorite—found his bid to oust the president blocked by Cuban tanks.⁶⁵

The belief of many Soviet leaders that they could control domestic political developments in Third World countries was a misperception with fateful

consequences for Soviet foreign policy in the late Brezhnev era. The Angolan intervention played an important part in upholding this misperception, as the reporting from Luanda shows. In hindsight, one of the main managers of Moscow's African and Asian policies in the late 1970s, Karen Brutents, has claimed that it was Angola which led to Ethiopia which led to Afghanistan, not in terms of the circumstances and structure of the interventions—which certainly varied—but in terms of the inflated pretensions of control over foreign left-wing movements which were stimulated by the Angolan affair. Brutents' point is a good one, although we should still be careful in generalizing about the direction of Soviet foreign policy during that period until we have more documentation on the discussions of the Politburo and General Staff.⁶⁶

On the other hand, as I have argued elsewhere, what Morton Kaplan terms the "loose bipolar structure" of the Cold War international system often gave Third World revolutionary parties a chance to enter into alliances with one of the great powers, a chance which they may not have been offered in a more complex global constellation of states. As the aspiring, anti-systemic power, the Soviet Union was particularly likely to be the candidate for such alliances from a Third World perspective. The leaders of some African movements, including the MPLA, knew of these possibilities and sometimes knew how to exploit them. In addition to its social and economic message, this potential for a powerful ally was one of the assets of African communism during the 1970s, an asset which increased in importance as their revolutions highlighted the idea of a socialist victory in the Third World in Soviet foreign policy ideology.⁶⁷

There is enough evidence in the materials on Angola, and elsewhere, to indicate that the Soviet leadership was very much aware of the strategic opportunities which the post-Vietnam anti-interventionist mood in the United States afforded Moscow for activism in regional conflicts. It is likely that the Politburo would have been much less inclined to interventions like the one in

Angola if they had been convinced that Washington would respond in force. The conventional realist approach to interventions provides adequate explanation for this side of Soviet interventionism: the Brezhnev leadership saw an opportunity for unchecked expansion and made use of it.⁶⁸

On local factors, which were crucial in the case of Angola, some scholars have argued that great power interventions are grounded not so much in misperceptions—the "slippery slope" theory of growing commitment—as in what Charles Kupchan calls the "reputational and intrinsic interest," of the intervening power.⁶⁹ This is an attempt to rescue the case for an interest-driven decision-making process in cases where there is a significant discrepancy between the prior expectations of an intervening power and the outcome of its action—an argument which of course can only be tested through the evidence.

In the case presented here, would a clearer perception of the conditions inside the MPLA—and of Soviet inability to change these conditions—have prevented an intervention? Possibly, not least since much of Moscow's historical experience pointed away from such an adventure. Soviet diplomacy was at most times very cautious outside its own core area, preferring mutually advantageous links with established regimes rather than with revolutionary movements. Up to the Angolan intervention, the Soviet Union never gave decisive support to a revolutionary movement outside its neighboring countries. One can indeed argue that the United States has supported more successful revolutionary movements, even since the mid-1970s, for instance in Nicaragua and in Afghanistan.⁷⁰

What prevented a "clear view" of the obstacles to long-term successful intervention was primarily Soviet foreign policy ideology. Its mix of Russian exceptionalism, Marxist-Leninist theory, and the Soviet experience of economic and political development, created a fertile ground for believing that difficulties associated with the character of the movements and societies targeted for intervention could be over-

come, in spite of much contrary information. In the case of Angola, this belief contributed significantly to the intervention and sustained the decision to commit additional men, money, and material to the country in subsequent years. It even led Moscow's local representatives to sum up Angola as a success, thereby over time encouraging further Soviet "limited interventions" in Africa and Asia, culminating in the Afghanistan disaster.⁷¹

We need much more evidence from Russian and foreign sources in order to generalize about the nature of Soviet Cold War involvement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. From what we see so far, the two faces of Soviet association with Third World radicals—revolutionary patronage and distrustful caution—correspond closely with two faces of Russian culture and history. One is the elite tradition which has sought to bring Russia into a Europeanized society of states. The other is the tradition of defiance of the West, a radical and, in European terms, sectarian approach to Russia's international role. Both are visible during the last phase of the Soviet experiment: CPSU officials seem to have felt as uncomfortable at meetings in the White House as when visiting PLO training camps in Syria. Both for historians and political scientists, the opening of Russian archives offers opportunities to revisit these motives of Soviet foreign policy and to expand our understanding of their role in the international history of the Cold War.

¹ I am grateful to Ilya Gaiduk and Maxim Korobochkin for their assistance in locating materials in Moscow. My thanks also to the former head of the State Archives Service of the Russian Federation, Dr. Rudolf G. Pikhoia, and to the staff of the *Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii* (Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation; hereafter TsKhSD) in Moscow for their help during my archival research. Piero Gleijeses, Geir Lundestad, and Iver B. Neumann offered helpful comments on a draft version.

² See Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991); Valentin Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen* (Munich: Droemer Knaur, 1993); Francis Fukuyama, *Moscow's Post-Brezhnev Reassessment of the Third World*. RAND report no. 3337-USDP (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1986); Andrei Kolosov, "Pereosmysleniie politiki v 'tretiem

“mire” [Rethinking Policy in the Third World], *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* 4 (April 1990).

³ A classic summary is Hans J. Morgenthau, “To Intervene or Not to Intervene,” *Foreign Affairs* 45 (April 1967). George W. Breslauer has an excellent survey of recent literature on Soviet interventions in “Ideology and Learning in Soviet Third World Policy,” *World Politics* 44: 3 (July 1987), 429-448.

⁴ Karen N. Brutents, former first deputy head of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department, interview with author, Moscow, 5 October 1993 (hereafter “Brutents interview”). For a discussion, see Steven R. David, “Soviet Involvement in Third World Coups,” *International Security* 11 (Summer 1986), 3-36.

⁵ Celeste A. Wallander, “Third World Conflict in Soviet Military Thought,” *World Politics* 42:1 (October 1989), 31-37; Bruce D. Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 36-59. See also Samuel P. Huntington, “Patterns of Intervention: Americans and Soviets in the Third World,” *The National Interest* (Spring 1987), 39-47.

⁶ Huntington, “Patterns of Intervention,” 43; on Soviet interest groups, see Jan S. Adams, “Incremental Activism in Soviet Third World Policy: The Role of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee,” *Slavic Review* 48: 4 (Winter 1989), 614-30 and, for an insider's view of one of the institutions, former head of the KGB First Chief Directorate Leonid V. Shebarshin, *Ruka Moskvy: Zapiski nachalnika sovetskoi razvedki* (Moscow: Tsentr-100, 1992). This article is in part based on the archives of the International Department, now kept in TsKhSD. The International Department archives contain a large collection of materials important to understanding Soviet foreign policy history—among them embassy reports, documents created for the Politburo or the party Secretariat, intelligence summaries, and records of conversations with foreign leaders. A small portion of this material—documents which the Politburo or the heads of the MO wanted to have available for reference purposes—is held in so-called *osobyie papki* or “special files,” most of which are still unavailable to scholars.

⁷ See the article by Piero Gleijeses elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

⁸ KGB to MO [International Department of the CPSU CC], 13 April 1970, TsKhSD, fond (f.) 5, opis' (op.) 62 delo (d.) 535, listy (ll.) 7-9. This report, primarily an analysis of the preparations for the third summit conference of non-aligned nations in Lusaka, also notes that this conference will mean a step forward for Soviet diplomacy, that China's influence within the group is receding, and that the United States is increasingly isolated in the Third World. See also KGB (Andropov) to MO, 6 May 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 32-35. On the KGB's influence on Brezhnev's thinking: author's interview with Oleg Troianovskii, former Soviet UN ambassador, Moscow, 14 September 1992.

⁹ KGB to MO, 4 June 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 536, ll. 73-76; KGB (Chebrikov) to MO, 26 November 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 115-118. The latter report is based on an evaluation of European policies toward Portugal, originating with an analysis of materials from the Brit-

ish Conservative Party. The GRU, in a major report on U.S. strategies in Africa, noted that the continent had become more important for the Americans both strategically and in terms of its natural resources. “Capitalist states,” said the GRU, “are putting pressure on African countries to enter into base agreements and military assistance plans.” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 71-90, 80.

¹⁰ General'nyi shtab voorushennykh sil SSSR [General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR] (Glavnoe razvedivatel'noe upravlenie [Main intelligence directorate]; hereafter GRU) to MO, 15 September 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 63-68; GRU to MO, “Po meropriiatiiam, napravlennym na oslablenie pozitsii KNR v Afrike [On Measures (and) Directions to Weaken the Positions of the PRC in Africa],” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 96-101.

¹¹ KGB (Andropov) to MO, 6 May 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 32-35, 35.

¹² V.N. Bezukladnikov (counsellor, Lusaka) to MO and attached letter from Neto to CPSU CC concerning request for receiving MPLA members for military training, 24 June 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 535, ll. 99-102; D.Z. Belokolos to MO, 14 July 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 536, ll. 195-200.

¹³ Belokolos to MO, 25 July 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 536, ll. 215-218; Embassy, Lusaka to MO, political letter: “Perspektivy razvitiia borby naroda Angoly protiv portugalskikh kolonizatorov [Perspectives on the Development of the Angolan People's Struggle Against the Portuguese Colonizers],” n.d. (October 1970), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 536, ll. 219-228, 224. The Soviet intelligence services still suspected that Neto kept the China option in reserve. See KGB to MO, 8 October 1970, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 62, d. 536, l. 212.

¹⁴ Soviet embassy, Kinshasa to MO, 16 January 1973, “K voprosu o primirenii mezhdru FNLA i MPLA [On the question of reconciliation between the FNLA and the MPLA],” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 843, ll. 4-9; Belokolos to MO, 10 October 1973, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 844, ll. 121-123. The CPSU CC archives hold large amounts of documents on Soviet relations with all liberation movements in Southern Africa, especially the ANC and the Zimbabwe African People's Union in addition to the MPLA (see footnote 6).

¹⁵ John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution. Volume 2: Exile Politics and Guerilla Warfare, 1962-1976* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), 199.

¹⁶ MPLA (Pedro Van Dunem) to CC CPSU, 11 December 1972, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 844, l. 22; Soviet embassy, Kinshasa to MO, 16 January 1973, “K voprosu o primirenii mezhdru FNLA i MPLA [On the question of reconciliation between the FNLA and the MPLA],” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 843, ll. 4-9; Soviet embassy, Kinshasa to MO, 12 April 1973, “K voprosu ob otnosheniakh mezhdru MPLA i FNLA [On the question of relations between the MPLA and the FNLA],” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 843, ll. 54-57; Neto to CC CPSU, 23 June 1973, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 844, ll. 91; Belokolos to MO, 7 February 1974 (Conversation with Daniel Chipenda), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 67, d. 758, ll. 5-8.

¹⁷ Belokolos to MO, 25 October 1973, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 66, d. 844, ll. 118-120; E.I. Afanassenko

(ambassador, Brazzaville) to MO, 30 March 1974, political letter: “O polozhenii v ‘Narodnom dvizhenii za osvobodzhenie Angoli’ (MPLA) [On the situation in ‘The People's Movement for the Liberator of Angola’ (MPLA)],” TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 67, d. 758, ll. 37-45, 40.

¹⁸ Iu.A. Iukalov (chargé d'affaires, Dar-es-Salaam) to MO, 22 May 1974, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 67, d. 758, ll. 70-71; E.I. Afanassenko to MO, 8 June 1974, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 67, d. 758, ll. 78-81.

¹⁹ Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, vol. 2, 245-48.

²⁰ Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, vol. 2, 249-50; George Wright, *U.S. Policy Towards Angola: The Kissinger Years, 1974-1976* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1990), 18-23.

²¹ Afanassenko to MO, 10 October 1974, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 67, d. 758, ll. 121-122; see also Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, vol. 2, 251-253.

²² Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, vol. 2, 253; Michael Wolfers and Jane Bergerol, *Angola in the Frontline* (London: Zed, 1983), 109-122, presents the MPLA view of events.

²³ Afanassenko to MO, 4 December 1974, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 11-12. Raymond Garthoff correctly concludes that the Soviet decision “preceded the American funding in January 1975, although it probably followed the military efforts of the FNLA in November.” *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985), 507.

²⁴ Embassy, Brazzaville to MO, 25 December 1974, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 10-21, 21, 17.

²⁵ Marcum, *Angolan Revolution*, vol. 2, 257-58; Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 533-34.

²⁶ S.A. Slipchenko (Soviet ambassador, Dar-es-Salaam) to MO, 30 December 1974 (Conversation with Oscar Oramas, Cuban Foreign Ministry; later ambassador to Luanda), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 3-7; Afanassenko to MO, 10 January 1975 (Conversation with Cuban ambassador A. Columbio Alvarez), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 17-18, 18. See also Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 130-137; William M. LeoGrande, “Cuban-Soviet Relations and Cuban Policy in Africa,” *Cuban Studies* 10:1 (January 1980), 1-48.

²⁷ B. Putilin (first secretary, embassy Brazzaville) to MO, n.d. (late January, 1975), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 10-21; Afanassenko to MO, 30 January 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 26. U.S. support for Holden Roberto—with whom the CIA for several years had had “an intelligence gathering relationship”—was limited to “non-lethal equipment” up to July 1975; see “Talking points for secretary Kissinger. NSC meeting on Angola, Friday, June 27, 1975.” National Security Archive (NSArchive Angola collection of documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (hereafter “National Security Archive Angola FOIA collection”). The Archive, a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository, is located on the 7th floor of the Gelman Library at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; Robert E. Gates,

From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 65-69, has a useful account of CIA initiatives on Angola.

²⁸ Slipchenko to MO, 6 February 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 48-54, 51; Slipchenko to MO, 24 August 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 238-246.

²⁹ Embassy, Brazzaville to MO, 14 April 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 50-53, 53. For the relationship among the Angolan groups, see Franz-Wilhelm Heimer, *The Decolonization Conflict in Angola, 1974-76: An Essay in Political Sociology* (Geneva: Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales, 1979).

³⁰ V.V. Aldoshin (chargé d'affaires, embassy, Dar-es-Salaam) to MO, 20 April 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 153-156; Institut Afriki Akademiia Nauk SSSR (Africa Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences) to MO, 19 June 1975, "Protsess dekolonizatsii v Angole i politika imperialisticheskikh derzhav [The Decolonization Process in Angola and the Policies of the Imperialist Powers]," TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 87-110; Embassy, Brazzaville to MO, 14 April 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 50-53.

³¹ Nina D. Howland, "The United States and Angola, 1974-88: A Chronology," in *Department of State Bulletin* 89:2143 (February 1989), 16-19; John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978), 40-57; Paul L. Moorcraft, *African Nemesis: War and Revolution in Southern Africa 1945-2010* (London: Brassey's, 1990), 76-81. See also Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Nathaniel Davis to Under Secretary Joseph J. Sisco, 12 July 1975, and Sisco to Deputy to the National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, 15 July 1975, both in National Security Archive Angola FOIA collection. The American covert military aid was in addition to U.S. civilian assistance and military and financial aid procured by the United States from U.S. allies in the region, notably Zaire. (See Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 95th Congress, Second Session, 25 May 1978; also Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, rev.ed.; (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1994), 560-70).

³² Afanasenko to MO, 14 June 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, l. 137; Afanasenko to MO, *ibid.*, ll. 180-82.

³³ Afanasenko to MO, 4 July 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 8, d. 1962, ll. 136-38; Slipchenko to MO, 10 February 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 44-47, 46. (For an alternate view based on Cuban sources, see the article by Piero Gleijeses elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.)

³⁴ Iu. K. Naumov, (councillor, Dar-es-Salaam) to MO, 2 August 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 226-27; record of conversation, Afanasenko-Congolese Prime Minister Henri Lopez, 17 June 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 113-14. On the Cuban role, see also Putilin to MO, 14 April 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 50-53. See also Klinghoffer and Edward Gonzalez, "Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Africa," in David E. Albright, ed. *Communism in Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University

Press, 1980), and the aforementioned Gleijeses article.

³⁵ M.A. Manasov (chargé d'affaires, embassy, Havana) to MO, 15 August 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, l. 122. This document is a record of the conversation between Manasov and Oscar Cienfuegos, an assistant to Fidel Castro, who brought the Cuban leader's message to the Soviet embassy. No copy of the message itself has been found in the MO records. Georgi M. Kornienko, former first vice-foreign minister, interview with author, Moscow, 5 October 1993 (hereafter "Kornienko interview"); Brutents interview; Brutents in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Workshop on US-Soviet Relations and Soviet Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East and Africa in the 1970s*, Oral history transcript, Lysebu, 1-3 October 1994 (Oslo: Norwegian Nobel Institute, 1994, hereafter "Lysebu transcript"), 68-69.

³⁶ Afanasenko to MO, 17 August 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 196-203, 196.

³⁷ Kornienko interview; Brutents interview.

³⁸ *Ibid.* On the 1968 tensions in Soviet-Cuban relations, see Philip Brenner and James G. Blight, "Cuba, 1962: The Crisis and Cuban-Soviet Relations: Fidel Castro's Secret 1968 Speech," *CWIHP Bulletin* 5 (Spring 1995), 1, 81-85.

³⁹ Georgi Kornienko, the deputy foreign minister, later recalled that the Soviet leadership tried to stop the Cubans: "I read a cable from our ambassador in Conakry [Guinea] which said, among many other things, that the Cuban ambassador had told him that the next day some planes with Cuban troops will land in Conakry for refueling on the way to Angola. I asked [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko, do you know anything? He called Andropov, he called Grechko. Nobody knew anything. All of them were against it and reported it immediately to the Politburo and suggested that we stop Castro. It took some hours to write the report, to get the decision, and to send the message to Castro. By this time the planes were in the air. You could rightly ask: How could it be—Soviet planes, stationed on Cuba, but it was Soviet planes and we had quite a few military people there. . . I checked. Well, technically, our people were involved, our planes were there for Cuban use, our advisers were involved, but they were completely convinced that a political decision had been taken [in Moscow]" (Kornienko interview). See also Gabriel García Márquez, "Operation Carlota: Cuba's Role in Angolan Victory," *Venceremos* 4:5 (February 1977), 1-8; Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980), 109-20.

⁴⁰ Embassy, Brazzaville to MO, 15 September 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, ll. 118-121; see Moorcraft, *African Nemesis*, 83-84. The military situation in Angola at the time of the Cuban intervention is still under dispute. Piero Gleijeses, who has studied the Angolan war based on Cuban documents, believes that through the first half of October the MPLA was winning the war (Gleijeses, personal communication to author). The MPLA reports to Moscow (and presumably also to Havana) are much less optimistic (see Naumov to MO, 3 and 20 October 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 268-270, 280-81).

⁴¹ Kornienko interview; Brutents interview; Slipchenko to MO, 30 October 1975 TsKhSD, f.

5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 313-320; Iu.K. Naumov to MO, 20 October 1975 TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1982, ll. 280-281. See also comments by Kornienko, Brutents and others in Lysebu transcript; and Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Decision-Making on the Intervention in Angola," in Albright, ed., *Communism in Africa*. Several of the MO documents dealing with this issue are not yet declassified.

⁴² Embassy, Brazzaville to MO, 15 September 1975 TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1941, l. 118 (the Brazzaville station also underlined that the FNLA as late as August 1975 was still receiving assistance from Romania and North Korea); Kornienko interview.

⁴³ Slipchenko to MO, 3 November 1975 (conversation with J. Nyerere), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 305-307.

⁴⁴ Secretariat card index, 192 meeting, 5 November 1975, TsKhSD; Afanasenko to MO, 4 November 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 230-231.

⁴⁵ Klinghoffer, *Angolan War*, 26-27; Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 512.

⁴⁶ G.A. Zverev (chargé d'affaires, Luanda) to MO, 1 March 1976, political report: "Nekotorye voprosy voenno-politicheskoi i ekonomicheskoi obstanovki v Angole" [On Some Questions Concerning the Military-Political and Economic Situation in Angola], TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 9, d. 2513 (hereafter "Zverev report"), appendix. In looking at Cuban documents, Piero Gleijeses finds no trace of Soviet support for the airlift before January 1976.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Moorcraft, *African Nemesis*, 87-91.

⁴⁸ Zverev report, appendix; Moorcraft, *African Nemesis*, 90.

⁴⁹ Zverev report, pp. 13-23; V.N. Rykov (ambassador, Algiers) to MO, 20 December 1975, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 1-4; CPSU CC Secretariat card index, 197 meeting, 23 December 1975, TsKhSD. See also Moorcraft, *African Nemesis*, 90. The archive of the Soviet General Staff is still not open for scholarly research.

⁵⁰ Donald Rothchild and Caroline Hartzell, "The Case of Angola: Four Power Intervention and Disengagement," in Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson and Larry Berman, eds., *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 163-208.

⁵¹ B. Putilin (first secretary, Luanda) to MO, 27 March 1976, report: "O polozhenii v MPLA [On the Situation in the MPLA]," TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 29-34; Klinghoffer, *Angolan War*, 61-71.

⁵² Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, 227-248; Fred Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (London: Coronet Books, 1988), 174-181.

⁵³ Brutents in Lysebu transcript, pp. 76-77.

⁵⁴ Soviet embassy, Luanda, to MO, 15 May 1976, report on discussions during meeting between Raul Castro and Jorge Risquet (Cuba) and I.F. Ponomarenko and A.I. Dubenko (USSR Ministry of Defense), TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513 (hereafter "Castro discussions"), ll. 42-48; on Vietnam, Mikhail Kapitsa, former vice-foreign minister, author's interview, Moscow, 7 September 1992. See also Galia Golan, *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World* (New York: Unwin Hyman, 1988); Mark

Katz, *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Neil Matheson, *The "Rules of the Game" of Superpower Military Intervention in the Third World, 1975-1980* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982).

⁵⁵ G.A. Zverev to MO, 1 March 1976, political report: "Nekotorye voprosy voenno-politicheskoi i ekonomicheskoi obstanovki v Angole" [On Some Questions Concerning the Military-Political and Economic Situation in Angola], TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 9, d. 2513, ll. 13-23, 15-16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23; Castro discussions, ll. 42-48. For the history of the Cuban-Soviet relationship, see Dominguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution*, 78-84.

⁵⁷ G.A. Zverev to MO, 1 March 1976, political report: "Nekotorye voprosy voenno-politicheskoi i ekonomicheskoi obstanovki v Angole" [On Some Questions Concerning the Military-Political and Economic Situation in Angola], TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 9, d. 2513, ll. 13-14; G.A. Zverev to MO, report on conversation, Raúl Valdés Vivó (Head, General Department for International Relations, Cuban Communist Party) - Zverev, 28 May 1976, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 53-54; Castro discussion, l. 45.

⁵⁸ B. Putilin (first secretary, Luanda) to MO, 27 March 1976, report: "O polozhenii v MPLA [On the Situation in the MPLA]," TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 29-34.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Soviet embassy, Luanda, to MO, 21 June 1976, Report: "Ob informatsionno-propagandistskoi rabote za II kvartal 1976 g." [On Information and Propaganda Work in the Second Quarter of 1976], TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 60-62. The embassy did, however, find it difficult to dispose of "several" sets of Lenin's collected works in French—not surprisingly, since more than 90 percent of all Angolans were illiterate and those who were able to read mostly did so in Portuguese.

⁶¹ Castro discussions; F.D. Kudashkin (counsellor, Luanda) to MO, 30 July 1976, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 82-83. By the end of 1976 Soviet authorities were hard-pressed to find the Marxist-Leninist avant-garde in Angola. See N.P. Tolubeev (Soviet ambassador, Havana) to MO, 10 December 1976, memorandum of conversation Jorge Risquet - Tolubeev, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 121-123.

⁶² On Fidel Castro: Marquez, "Operation Carlota," 1-2; Castro discussions, l. 46; G.A. Zverev to MO, 28 May 1976, memorandum of conversation, Raúl Valdés Vivó - Zverev, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513, ll. 49-54.

⁶³ Castro discussions, ll. 43, 47.

⁶⁴ Soviet embassy, Luanda, to MO, 15 August 1976, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 69, d. 2513.

⁶⁵ Philip Windsor, "Superpower Intervention," in Hedley Bull, ed., *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 54. Michael Wolfers and Jane Bergerol, *Angola in the Front Line* (London: Zed, 1983), 85-99, is a generally reliable account of the Alves coup.

⁶⁶ George W. Breslauer, "Ideology and Learning in Soviet Third World Policy," *World Politics* 39 (April 1987), 429-48; Richard F. Herrmann, "Soviet Behavior In Regional Conflicts: Old Questions, New Strategies, and Important Lessons," *World Politics* 44: 3 (April 1992), 432-65;

Brutents in Lysebu transcript, p. 77.

⁶⁷ Morton Kaplan, "Intervention in Internal War," in James N. Rosenau, ed. *International Aspects of Civil Strife* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 110-11; Odd Arne Westad, "Rethinking Revolutions: The Cold War in the Third World," *Journal of Peace Research* 29:4 (1992), 455-64. See also Edward Kick and David Kiefer, "The Influence of the World System on War in the Third World," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 7 (1987), 34-48; and Kick, "World System Properties and Military Intervention-Internal War Linkages," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 11 (1983), 185-208; Oran R. Young, "Intervention and International Systems," *Journal of International Affairs* 22:2 (1968).

⁶⁸ For other examples, see Alexei Vassiliev, *Russian Policy in the Middle East: From Messianism to Pragmatism* (Reading: Ithaca, 1993), and Margot Light, ed., *Troubled Friendships: Moscow's Third World Ventures* (London: British Academic Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ Charles Kupchan, "Getting In: The Initial Stage of Military Intervention," in Levite et al., eds., *Foreign Military Intervention*, 259. For Afghanistan, see Odd Arne Westad, "Prelude to Invasion: The Soviet Union and the Afghan Communists, 1978-1979," *International History Review* 1:1 (February 1994), 49-69.

⁷⁰ The possible exception is of course Vietnam, but even there it is unlikely that Soviet aid was decisive for the outcome (see Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 232-253). On perceptions, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

⁷¹ On Soviet foreign policy ideology, see Stephen Shenfield in *Ideology and Soviet Politics*, edited by Stephen White and Alex Pravda (London: Macmillan, 1988), 203-24.

CWIHP FELLOWSHIPS

The Cold War International History Project awards a limited number of fellowship for scholars from countries on "the other side" of the Cold War to conduct up to one year of archival research in the United States. Recipients are based at the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Applications should include: CV; letter of nomination and three letters of recommendation; research proposal, indicating topic to be investigated and sources to be utilized; writing samples in English welcomed, though not required. Applicants should have a working ability in English. Preference will be given to scholars who have not previously had an opportunity to do research in the United States. Applications may be sent or faxed to: David Wolff, Director; Cold War International History Project; Woodrow Wilson Center; 1000 Jefferson Dr. SW; Washington, D.C. 20560 USA; fax: (202) 357-4439.

SOVIET DOCUMENTS ON ANGOLA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1975-79

Ed. note: Following are illustrations of Russian archival documents on Soviet policy toward Angola and Southern Africa in the 1970s. Most were culled from the files of the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation in Moscow (TsKhSD; the repository for records of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CC CPSU] from 1952 thru 1991) and declassified in early 1995 in connection with the "Carter-Brezhnev Project."

This international project, led by the the Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, organized a series of conferences bringing together former U.S. and Soviet officials, scholars, and newly-declassified documents to explore the reasons behind the collapse of superpower detente in the 1970s and its possible lessons for current and future Russian-American relations. (These documents were among a much larger collection specifically declassified by Russian authorities in preparation for a conference on superpower rivalry in the Third World held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in March 1995.)

The Cold War International History Project and the National Security Archive—a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository located at George Washington University—cooperated with the Carter-Brezhnev Project and played a major role in obtaining the release of these Russian documents and supporting the translation of some of them into English. The full set of photocopies of Russian, American, and East German documents obtained by the Project may be examined by interested researchers at the National Security Archive, which is located on the 7th floor of the Gelman Library, George Washington University, 2130 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20037; tel. (202) 994-7000; fax: (202) 994-7005.

* * * * *

Soviet Ambassador to the People's Republic of Angola E.I. Afanassenko, Memorandum of Conversation with President of the Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola Agostinho Neto, 4 July 1975

From the diary of
E.I. Afanasenko

SECRET
Copy No. 2
Ser. No. 181
21 July 1975

Record of Conference with
President of MPLA Agostinho NETO
4 July 1975

We received a visit from President of the MPLA Agostinho Neto. I informed him that the Central Committee of the CPSU was closely following the development of circumstances in Angola. The Soviet people are interested in the victory of democratic forces in Angola. In 1975, significant aid has been provided to the MPLA. Pursuant to instructions from the Central Committee of the CPSU, we had a conference with the President of the PRC [People's Republic of the Congo] M. Nguabi, in which the issue of rendering aid to the MPLA was discussed.

Neto thanked the Central Committee of the CPSU for the rendering of assistance. He stated that the leadership of the MPLA had recently expanded its contacts with governments of the African countries. In the course of these discussions, the MPLA is attempting to increase the number of its supporters in Africa. One of the immediate objectives of the MPLA is to prevent the discussion of the issue of Cabinda at the upcoming assembly concerned about the fact that this year [Ugandan leader] Idi Amin, who collaborates closely with [Zairian leader] Mobutu [Sese Seko], will become the Chairman of the OAU [Organization of African Unity]. We anticipate, said Neto, that the president of Uganda will come forward at the OAU assembly with a proposal to discuss the issue of Cabinda. Our meetings in Nigeria and our ongoing negotiations in the Congo with president M. Nguabi, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KPT [the Russian acronym for the Congolese Workers' Party] A. Lopez, member of the Central Committee of the KPT Obami-Itu, and Foreign Minister [Charles-David] Ganao, said Neto, are directed to this very question.

Negotiations between the MPLA and the KPT are proceeding successfully. An agreement has been reached to maintain ongoing consultations between the MPLA and KPT with the aim of developing a common policy and the conduct of joint efforts in Africa and Angola. In order to enhance

propaganda efforts prior to the establishment of radio broadcasting facilities in the country, broadcast of the radio program "Struggle of Angola" will be resumed in Brazzaville.

The president of the MPLA stated that one of the main points in the negotiations with the KPT was the issue of Cabinda. The PRC made the decision not to support the demand of autonomy for Cabinda at the OAU assembly which had been advanced by the Congo and Zaire last February. As to the change of their position on the Cabinda question, the Congolese assured the MPLA delegation that they would terminate assistance to the nationalist Cabindi organization FLEC. Inasmuch as the parties had reached an agreement on the Cabinda issue, the PRC allowed the MPLA to use its territory for the transport of arms, military equipment and other cargo supplied to the Movement by the Soviet Union and other friendly countries. In addition, the Congolese confirmed their decision to close their land border with Cabinda for the MPLA. In order to export supplies to Angola, they allotted the port and airfield at Pointe-Noire. Transportation of cargo is to be carried out by the land and sea forces of the MPLA. Neto was outspoken in his appraisal of the results of the negotiations with the Congolese. He emphasized that the refusal of the Congo to support the Cabindi demand for autonomy represented an important step forward in the normalization of relations between the MPLA and the KPT.

The president of the MPLA proceeded to characterize the domestic situation in Angola. He pointed out that the existence of three national liberation movements in the country was creating a favorable opportunity for reactionary forces in the country, which in turn was leading to a further intensification of political, social, and economic conflicts. Neto pointed to two groups of reactionary forces acting against Angola. The first group he attributed to domestic Portuguese reactionaries. This group is fomenting tensions in the country and provoking a mass emigration of the white population from Angola. The departure of large numbers of technical specialists has resulted in serious damage to the country's economy. The white reactionaries are capitalizing on the support of the present Supreme Commissar of Angola and a large portion of the Portuguese officers. The second group of reactionary forces consists of foreign reac-

tionaries. Neto also included the FNLA in that group.

The president of the MPLA said that the military conflict which took place last June demonstrated the strength of the MPLA's military detachments. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the FNLA's forces, the MPLA is no weaker than the FNLA in military terms. Neto declared that the MPLA commands great political influence in the country which is continuing to grow. At the same time, he acknowledged that two northwest provinces of Angola have been controlled by the FNLA since last June. In addition, UNITA commands major influence in Bie and the surrounding regions, where a large portion of the country's population lives.

Neto characterized UNITA as an organization representing the interests of white farmers with reactionary leanings. However, UNITA does not command significant military forces and is attempting to play a role as an intermediary between the MPLA and the FNLA. The president of the MPLA spoke in favor of a tactical alliance with UNITA. The desirability of such an alliance was advocated to the leadership of the MPLA by numerous heads of African governments, first and foremost, by the PRC.

The president of the MPLA expressed doubts about fulfillment of all the agreements signed in Nakuru (Kenya). One of the reasons for the likely breakdown of those agreements is the aggression of the FNLA, which is unlikely to give up its armed provocations. All of this, Neto emphasized, requires the MPLA to continue the development of its armed forces. In this connection it is counting on aid from the Soviet Union. The MPLA has decided to address the Central Committee of the CPSU with a request to furnish additional military and financial aid. At the end of this July, an MPLA delegation will be dispatched to the USSR, headed by member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPLA Iko Kareira (commander in chief of the MPLA).

Neto reported that last June, a delegation of the MPLA visited the PRC [People's Republic of China] at the invitation of the Chinese government. Zambia, Tanzania, and the PRC [People's Republic of the Congo] also took part in the organization of that trip. In the course of negotiations in the PRC, the Chinese assured their delegation that they would terminate all forms of

military aid to all three Angolan national liberation movements until the granting of independence to Angola.

I thanked the president of the MPLA for the interesting information. I promised to communicate to the Central Committee of the CPSU the request of the MPLA to furnish additional military and financial aid.

The conference was attended by members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the MPLA Lucio Lara and Jose Eduardo, member of the governing council of the MPLA Pedro Van-Dunen, as well as the first Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in the PRC Comrade B. G. Putilin.

Ambassador of the USSR to the
People's Republic of the Congo
/s/ E. Afanassenko

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 68, d. 1962, ll. 157-159.]

**Soviet Ambassador to the People's
Republic of Angola B.S. Vorobiev,
Memorandum of Conversation with
President A. Neto, 4 September 1976**

From the diary of SECRET
B.S. VOROBIEV Copy No. 1
 Ser. No. 286

Record of Conversation with
President of PRAA. NETO

4 September 1976

On 4 September 1976, I visited President A. Neto at his invitation.

Neto inquired as to whether any information had been received from Moscow regarding the Soviet position on issues relating to the national liberation movement in southern Africa, and whether that information could be imparted to him, if possible, in connection with the upcoming meeting of the presidents from five countries (Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana), scheduled for September 15.

I said to him in general that no information had yet been received. Based on materials received from the center [Moscow], I told him about the ongoing conference in Moscow of delegations from three national liberation movements from southern Africa.

For my part, I asked the president to

share his thoughts in connection with the upcoming meeting and requested his assessment of conditions in the national liberation movement and of the position of other African countries. Neto reported that it had been determined to hold the meeting of the five presidents ahead of schedule (that is, not on September 15 as referenced above), and that in just two hours he was flying to Dar-es-Salaam. The principal theme of the meeting would be the meeting between [U.S. Secretary of State Henry A.] Kissinger and [South African Prime Minister John] Vorster and its implications for Africa. He, Neto, still did not know exactly what position to propose at the meeting, what policy to adopt. This being his first opportunity for participation in this sort of a conference (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana have already met repeatedly on these issues), it is apparent that Neto needs to hear the opinions of his colleagues at the meeting, and only after that will he be in a position to formulate his position. For example, it is not entirely clear to Neto why the participation and assistance of Kissinger is necessary. He also does not understand the inconsistency of [Zambian] President [Kenneth] Kaunda on the issue of the intermediating role of Kissinger in contacts with Vorster.

Neto indicated further that, lacking a full understanding of the positions held by Tanzania and the other participants in the conference, he is presently having difficulty articulating any concepts on these issues, although after his return from the meeting, these issues will be clearer to him, and he expects to be able to inform us about them, so they can be communicated to Moscow.

In the course of our discussion I informed the president about the response received from Moscow regarding the attitude of the Angolan side toward the issue of the situation in the South Atlantic, conveyed through the Soviet Ambassador by [Angolan] Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento.

President Neto expressed his appreciation for the speedy response. He declared his full agreement with all of the positions held by the Soviet side and emphasized that, in the recent past, new facts had emerged indicating an increased interest by the USA in the ROZM [Republic of Cape Verde] and by France in the DRSTP [Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe].

The president further stated that the Politburo of the MPLA, by special dispensation, had empowered Politburo member and Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento, with responsibility for all important issues of foreign policy, to prepare additional proposals on the issue over further development of contacts by the PRA with Sao-Tome and Principe. He requested the Soviet Ambassador to provide him with detailed positions of the Soviet side on the issue over the situation in the South Atlantic and relations of Lopo do Nascimento with the ROZM and the DRSTP.

Neto stated his desire for a continual exchange of information between the PRA and the USSR on international questions, in particular those concerning the situation in Africa and the South Atlantic. He stated that he intended to address these questions in his conferences in Moscow.

USSR AMBASSADOR TO THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
/s/ B. VOROBIEV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 65, d. 2513, ll. 100-101.]

**Soviet Ambassador to Angola,
V.P. Loginov, Memorandum of
Conversation with candidate-member
of the Politburo Secretary of the CC
MPLA-PT for international issues
P. Luvualu, 27 June 1978**

From the journal of SECRET
V.P. Loginov Copy no. 2 re: no. 222
 20 July 1978

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with candidate-member of the Politburo
Secretary of the CC of the MPLA-PT for
international issues
P. LUVUALU

27 June 1978

[I] visited candidate-member of the Politburo, Secretary of the CC of the MPLA-PT [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola—Partido Trabalho] for international issues, P. Luvualu at his invitation.

P. Luvualu informed me that at the current time the leadership of the People's Republic of Angola has sent several delegations to various African countries in order

to explain the Angolan position with regard to Zaire and to gather information on the real nature of the events in the Zairian province of Shaba. The delegations should once again underscore that neither Angola, nor the Soviet Union, nor Cuba bear any relation to the events in the province of Shaba, and that these events are an internal Zairian problem.

The Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT declared that there are objective factors which facilitate the continual occurrence of conflicts and tension in this region. The colonizers, when they drew the borders between states, did not take into account the ethnic make-up of the population. As a result, the significant nationality of the Lunda was broken up and in the current time lives in three countries — Zaire, Angola and Zambia. Moreover, at the current time there are over 250,000 Zairian refugees in Angola, who are mainly of the Lunda nationality and among them from 20,000 to 30,000 are former soldiers, the so-called Katanga gendarmes. After the war of independence, the central authorities in Zaire began to persecute members of the Lunda nationality who lived in the province of Shaba. Unlawful arrests took place as well as the execution of Zairian soldiers of the Lunda nationality.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that the province of Shaba is the richest of all Zairian provinces and provides a significant part of the hard-currency goods which enter the country, and that some of the largest foreign monopolies have invested capital in the exploitation of the natural resources of the province.

The catastrophic condition of the Zairian economy, the dizzying rise of prices, the corruption which has enveloped the whole machinery of state, including the army, the unbearably serious condition of the population, particularly of national minorities and the greater part of the military, aggravates the conflict between the Kinshasa government and the Lunda nationality, and lead to the revolts which occur from time to time among the soldiers of Lunda nationality in the Zairian army. During moments of acute conflict the Lunda refugees in Angola seek to assist their fellow-tribesmen in the province of Shaba. Moreover, all of the refugees in Angola, it goes without saying, would like to return to their homeland in Zaire. It is practically impossible to control the movement of

groups of Lunda nationality from Angola into Zaire and back, since the border between Angola and Zaire stretches out for approximately two thousand kilometers.

P. Luvualu underscored that Mobutu, in every instance when an internal conflict arises, strives by using false pretexts, to internationalize it. The Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT [referred to] the interference of Western powers—the members of NATO in the previous conflict in the province of Shaba and their proposal to create an inter-African armed force which would be used not only to resolve the current tasks of putting down the revolt of the Lunda nationality, [but also for] the preservation of the Mobutu regime, and the possibility for foreign monopolies to continue to exploit the resources of the province of Shaba.

The fact, declared P. Luvualu, that the Republic of South Africa has expressed a desire to take part in the inter-African forces confirms our evaluation of the neo-colonial nature of these forces. This evaluation is also confirmed by the fact that China has sent military instructors to Zaire and has offered equipment for arming the inter-African forces.

In the estimation of P. Luvualu, this issue concerns armed forces of international imperialism which are being created by NATO with the aim of supporting reactionary, unpopular regimes in Africa as well as supporting the struggle against progressive African countries and national liberation movements.

The long term goals of the Western countries consist of strengthening the position of NATO in the central part of Africa in order to break through to the Indian Ocean, i.e. for the neo-colonial conquest of Africa.

The Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT declared that the evaluation by the Angolan leadership of the events in Zaire is confirmed likewise by the resolution of the Western countries to offer Kinshasa economic assistance. The Western countries, as is well known, as a condition for granting such assistance demanded, first, a reform of the management of the Zairian economy and finances according to which representatives of the USA, France, Belgium, and the Federal Republic of Germany would have full control over the economy, finances, and the actions of the administrative apparatus from top to bottom. Secondly, they put forward a demand for the recon-

ciliation of the central Kinshasa authorities with the Lunda nationality in order that foreign monopolies might without resistance exploit the wealth of the province of Shaba. And, finally, the Western countries persist in seeking the reconciliation of Zaire with Angola in order to renew the transport of natural resources from the province of Shaba along the Benguela railroad.

P. Luvualu remarked in this connection that the president of the People's Republic of Angola, A. Neto, in his declaration of July 9, announced that the Zairian refugees will be led from the Zairian borders into the interior of Angola, that Angola will disarm the detachments of the FNLC [Front for the National Liberation of the Congo] which retreat from the province of Shaba into Angola, and that the Angolan government proposes that Zaire, in turn, draw off the UNITA, FNLA, and FLEC bases away from the Angolan border. The President of the People's Republic of Angola in this announcement also underscored that the refugees may live in any country according to their choice. This position, said P. Luvualu, is in complete accordance with the charter of the Organization of African Unity and international law.

Then the Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT raised the problem of Namibia. He informed us that, in appraising the aggression of the Republic of South Africa toward Angola at Cassinga, immediately following the important victory of SWAPO [Southwest African People's Organization] in the UN, the Angolan leadership came to the conclusion that the aggressive actions of the Republic of South Africa were made in pursuit of the following goals: to weaken SWAPO and force it to accept the plan of the 5 Western powers for Namibia; to gain time, in order to create in Namibia a puppet political force which would be able to counter SWAPO; to scare the People's Republic of Angola and weaken Angolan support for SWAPO.

P. Luvualu remarked that events had fully confirmed the correctness of this appraisal of the Angolan leadership. For example, in the present time in Namibia, the Republic of South Africa has created the so-called democratic party with the help of the renegade [Andrea] Chipanga and the so-called National Front of Namibia. Vorster feverishly attempts to prepare elections, which are falsified from the very beginning,

and to achieve an internal settlement on the model of the internal settlement of Rhodesia with the aid of puppets like Chipanga.

The Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT declared that the People's Republic of Angola will continue to support SWAPO. The Angolan leadership, he said, considers that for the peaceful resolution of the Namibian problem the Republic of South Africa should: officially define a deadline for the transfer of Walvis Bay to the authorities of Namibia, after declaring the independence of that country; for a period of transition draw off its troops, which are now concentrated on the border with Angola, to bases in the South of Namibia; immediately liberate all political prisoners in Namibia. P. Luvualu likewise remarked that Angola concurs with the proposed role of the UN in the transitional period in Namibia.

In conclusion P. Luvualu underscored that the maneuvers of Western countries around Angola will not succeed in forcing the MPLA-PT to turn from the path it has chosen. We, he declared, have made a firm and final choice of friends. This is the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other socialist countries. With the assistance and support of socialist states, and first and foremost of the Soviet Union and Cuba, Angola will follow its chosen path.

[I] thanked the Secretary of the CC MPLA-PT for this information. From my side I handed him the text of the Declaration of the Soviet Government on Africa (in Portuguese). I underscored that this is an important political action in defense of the independence of African governments, in the solidarity of the USSR in the struggle of the peoples of the continent against the imperialist interference in their affairs. I noted that the appraisal contained in it of the situation in Africa coincides with the position of the People's Republic of Angola. Then I gave him a translation into Portuguese of the Pravda article regarding the external policies of the USA.

I handed [him] a film on the first congress of the MPLA-PT and the sojourn in the People's Republic of Angola of the Soviet party delegation headed by Comrade A.P. Kirilenko.

P. Luvualu expressed his gratitude to the Soviet government for its unflagging support of progressive forces in Africa. He said that he would immediately bring the text of the Declaration to the attention of

the leadership of the People's Republic of Angola. He likewise expressed his gratitude for the gift of the CC CPSU.

In the course of our exchange of opinions on international problems P. Luvualu asked that I give information about the situation in South Yemen after the unsuccessful government coup.

Embassy advisor S. S. Romanov was present during this discussion.

USSR AMBASSADOR TO THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
/s/ V. LOGINOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1148, ll. 71-75; translated by Sally Kux; copy on file at National Security Archive.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Minister-counselor of the Soviet
Embassy in Havana M. Manasov and
Cuban Communist Party CC member
Raul Valdes Vivo, 7 May 1979**

From the journal of
M.A. Manasov

SECRET
copy no. 3
re: no 265
"24" May 1979

RECORD OF DISCUSSION
with member of the CC
Com[munist]Party of Cuba
comr. Raul Valdes Vivo

7 May 1979

I met with R.V. Vivo in the CC of the Party and, referring to the instructions of the Soviet ambassador, informed him of the discussion in the International Section of the CC CPSU with the members of the Executive Committee of the Jamaican People's National Party (PNP).

R.V. Vivo, having thanked me for the information, noted the significance of this meeting, which will enable the development of the connection between the CPSU and the PNP and, first and foremost, opens the possibility for the preparation of PNP cadres in the Soviet Union.

Then, in the course of the discussion, R.V. Vivo spoke about his recent trip to several African countries, which was carried out on the orders of F. Castro. This trip was undertaken, continued my interlocutor, because of the fact that the information which

we had received from our embassies in a number of African countries is of a subjective nature. In this connection I [Valdes Vivo] was given the task of becoming acquainted with the situation on location, to have discussions with the leaders of Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nigeria, and likewise with the Soviet ambassadors in these countries, in order to receive more complete and more objective information about the state of affairs in southern Africa.

I was tasked, he said, to convey to J[oshua]. Nkomo [leader of the Zimbabwe African Political Union, ZAPU] and R. Mugabe [leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union, ZANU], that Cuba is unable to satisfy their request to send pilots for the repulsion of air attacks on the training camps for the Patriotic Front armed forces; to clarify the possibility of unified action between ZAPU and ZANU; to lay out before their leaders and the leadership of the front-line governments the Cuban plan for the creation of a provisional government in Zimbabwe.

R.V. Vivo meanwhile remarked that in Angola at first there had not been clear cooperation between Cuba and the USSR, whereas in Ethiopia our countries have achieved the full coordination of our joint actions. The policy of Cuba and the Soviet Union with regard to southern Africa should likewise be coordinated, he underscored.

My interlocutor laid out the essence of the Cuban plan, which is summarized as follows. The declaration of a provisional government in Zimbabwe is realized not in exile, but in a part of the liberated territory of the country; J. Nkomo is proposed for the post of president of the country, R. Mugabe for prime minister; the program platform of the provisional government provides for the realization of a series of social-economic transformations, secures the interests of those countries which recognize its government; the rights of the white part of the population are guaranteed, elections are planned for the legislative organs of the country; constitutional guarantees are proclaimed, etc.

According to the words of R.V. Vivo, J. Nkomo and R. Mugabe have agreed with this plan, as have the leaders of the front-line states. The provisional government, in the estimation of the Cuban side, would possibly be recognized at first by 30 coun-

tries.

The active interference of England in the affairs of Zambia may ensure the victory of the puppet government, which would possibly lead to a conflict between ZANU and ZAPU if the unity of their actions are not achieved, noted my interlocutor.

He reported that the armed forces of the ZANU and the ZAPU include in total 24 thousand people (12 thousand in each organization), but unfortunately, these forces are as yet inactive. In the ranks of mercenaries there are 3 thousand blacks and 2 thousand whites.

R.V. Vivo briefly set forth the content of his discussion with the Soviet ambassador in Mozambique. According to his words, during the discussion of the situation in southern Africa, our ambassador noted that according to the theory of Marxism-Leninism, it is impossible to accelerate events in a country where there is not a revolutionary situation and where there is not civilization. "To that I responded in jest to the Soviet ambassador," said R.V. Vivo, "that if comrades L.I. Brezhnev and F. Castro decide that our countries will take part in the operations in Rhodesia, then we will participate in them."

By my request R.V. Vivo briefly informed me about the work of the last plenum of the CC Company of Cuba. He reported that the plenum summed up the fulfillment of the resolutions of the First Party Congress, revealed the deficiencies in the development of the national economy of the country, and set its course to overcome them. In view of the fact that the project for the resolution of the plenum on the given question did not reflect all aspects of the economic situation, the corresponding section of the CC of the Party was tasked with its reworking and with its publication.

With regard to the resolution of the plenum of the CC concerning the appointment of Lionel Soto [Prieto] as a member of the Secretariat of the CC of the Party, R.V. Vivo spoke very highly of him ("He is no Garcia Pelaes," he said) and reported, that L. Soto will be occupied with the issues of the party leadership of the country's economy; along the party line he is tasked with responsibility for Khuseplan, the National Bank, GKES [State Committee for Economic Cooperation], and other central organs of the national economy.

COUNSELLOR-MINISTER OF THE
EMBASSY OF THE USSR
IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
/s/ M. MANASOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 76, d. 834, ll. 82-84.]

**Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo
Meeting, 18 October 1979 (excerpt)**

[...]

9. Telegram from Havana Spec[ial]. # 741 and 744

SUSLOV. Comrades, you have read these telegrams. In one of them a question is raised that in a conversation with our ambassador, Raul Castro told about difficulties that had emerged with regard to replacement of the Cuban troops in Ethiopia. In the second conversation Raul Castro said the Angolans in all probability would appeal [probably to us] with a request to take over the maintainance [i.e., costs—trans.] of the Cuban troops in Angola. Secondly, he said that the Angolans treat the Cuban representatives rather tactlessly.

The next question concerned the assistance with arms to SWAPO. He remarked, that Soviet comrades assist SWAPO with arms but the SWAPO men absolutely do not fight and do not want to fight. Then one wonders, why we should help them with weapons[?] In one word, there are a number of very important principled questions which we should consider. I think that we should order the Defense Ministry and the International Department of the CC to consider these questions advanced in these telegrams, taking into account the exchange of opinions that took place at the meeting of the Politburo, [and] the proposals will be introduced to the CC.

ALL. Agreed.

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 89, per. 25, dok. 6, ll. 1-1; copy obtained by David Wolff; translation by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

**ZUBOK, PLESHAKOV
WIN GELBER PRIZE**

The Cold War International History Project congratulates Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine M. Pleshakov, two Russian historians who have been associated with the Project since its inception, for receiving the 1996 Lionel Gelber Prize for their book, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*, published by Harvard University Press. Zubok is currently based at the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository located at George Washington University; Pleshakov lives in Moscow, where he until recently worked as a researcher at the USA/Canada Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Established in 1989, the \$50,000 Lionel Gelber Prize, given by a Foundation named for the late Canadian diplomat, historian, and writer, is awarded annually to the winning author of a non-fiction book in the field of foreign relations. It was presented to Zubok and Pleshakov in Toronto on 7 October 1996. The jury citation read:

"Zubok and Pleshakov, two members of the young generation of Russian historians, have mined recently available documents to provide new insights into the inner workings of the Kremlin during the critical postwar period. Theirs is a significant contribution to the literature: a fresh and superbly researched appraisal of the ideological, strategic and human foundations of the Cold War, from the Soviet side. This is a praiseworthy book in the best traditions of what Lionel Gelber sought to encourage on behalf of readers everywhere: impressive without being intimidating; learned without being impenetrable; engaging without being superficial."

ANATOMY OF A THIRD WORLD COLD WAR CRISIS: NEW EAST-BLOC EVIDENCE ON THE HORN OF AFRICA, 1977-1978

Editor's Note: The Russian and East German documents presented below illuminate the "other side"—other sides, really—of one of the key events that hastened the collapse of U.S.-Soviet detente in the mid-1970s: the Horn of Africa Crisis of 1977-78, in which a regional rivalry between Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as domestic political instability in both countries, became entangled with superpower rivalry and competition for influence in the Third World. While Ethiopia and Somalia had a long-standing dispute over their borders, the immediate causes of the crisis dated to 1974, when a leftist revolution overthrew Ethiopian leader Emperor Haile Selassie, who had been a pillar of Western influence for decades, and to early February 1977, when the Ethiopian revolution took a more militant course when Haile Mengistu Mariam seized control of the ruling "Derg" and eliminated his chief rivals for power, including Teferi Bante, the revolution's erstwhile leader.

The Ethiopian Revolution opened up new possibilities for the Soviet Union to expand its influence in the region, where its chiefly had been Somalia, with whom it had concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. As the documents show, the Soviet Union and its allies, notably Cuban leader Fidel Castro, attempted persistently to keep both Ethiopia and Somalia within the socialist camp. This, in practice, meant trying to damp down Ethiopian-Somali hostility and, in particular, the territorial ambitions of Somali leader Mohammed Siad Barre, who claimed that ethnic Somalis were being persecuted in the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia and deserved liberation and incorporation into Somalia proper. In the course of trying to mediate the dispute, Moscow and Havana found that appeals to socialist international solidarity could only go so far in overcoming deep-seated national and even tribal disagreements.

Still—as demonstrated by a relatively cordial discussion between U.S. and Soviet diplomats in Addis Ababa in early 1977—the simmering regional hot-spot did not erupt into a full-blown superpower clash until the late summer, when Somalia launched an offensive to capture the Ogaden from Ethiopia. By then, sensing that the Ethiopian leadership was tilting toward Moscow, both the Siad Barre regime in Mogadishu and the Carter Administration in Washington were exploring the possibility of improving U.S.-Somali ties to the detriment of the Soviet Union, and Siad Barre evidently believed that Washington had flashed him at least a dim green light to attack Ethiopia (a claim which U.S. officials denied).

The Somali attacks of July-August 1977, shattering a Soviet mediation effort then taking place in Moscow, quickly achieved major success at thrusting into Ethiopian territory; by September-October, Somali or Somali-backed forces had captured most of the Ogaden. The Somali advances prompted desperate pleas from Mengistu for Soviet-bloc military support, and at some point that fall the Soviet Union and Cuba, which had already been providing some weapons to the Derg, decided that it would be unacceptable to allow Ethiopia—a strategically significant country seemingly poised to become an important member of the socialist bloc—to suffer a military defeat at the hands of a country (Somalia) which despite protestations of socialist orientation seemed to be quickly shifting into the "imperialist" camp.

The decision by Moscow and Havana to come to Mengistu's rescue became evident between November 1977 and February 1978, as Soviet planes and ships transported roughly 15,000 Cuban troops and large supplies of Soviet weaponry, and a USSR military mission led by Gen. Vasilii I. Petrov helped direct Ethiopian-Cuban military activities. The massive Soviet-Cuban airlift spurred an Ethiopian counter-offensive which evicted Somali forces from the Ogaden and entrenched the Mengistu regime in power.

At the same time, these developments cemented both Somalia's defection from the Soviet-bloc (in November, Mogadishu abrogated a 1974 Somali-Soviet friendship treaty) and Ethiopia's dependence on that same Soviet-bloc for military aid, and elevated the conflict to a superpower crisis, as Washington charged Moscow with employing Cuban proxy forces to expand its influence in Africa. Moscow and Havana maintained that they had only helped Ethiopia defend itself from a U.S.-backed assault from Somalia (and various "reactionary" Arab countries supporting it), whereas Carter Administration hardliners (notably National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski) asserted that the Horn crisis, coming on the heels of the Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola, revealed a rising international assertiveness on the Kremlin's part, a danger requiring a tough American response—if not a direct military involvement to stem the Soviet-Cuban recapture of the Ogaden (or a perceived threat to Somalia), then in the form of a closer relationship with the People's Republic of China, the USSR's bitter communist foe.

This new dispute between the USSR and United States flared up in late 1977 just as it seemed that, after a rocky start, the Carter and Brezhnev leaderships were finally beginning to make some progress toward improving relations, and, most importantly, toward conclud-

ing a SALT II treaty. Instead of finishing up the arms control treaty—which the Soviets had made a prerequisite for a Carter-Brezhnev summit meeting which the American leader eagerly desired—the Horn Crisis exacerbated superpower tensions and, just as important, seemed to tilt the balance of power within the Carter Administration away from Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, who stressed reaching agreements with Moscow, and toward Brzezinski, who favored “linkage” between progress toward bilateral accords and Soviet behavior in the Third World. The charges and countercharges between Washington and Moscow, along with disagreements on other areas such as human rights, the Middle East (where the Kremlin accused Washington of backing off an agreed-approach in favor of backing a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli accord), and relations with China, helped stall progress in the SALT II negotiations and generally embitter U.S.-Soviet relations in the first half of 1978. Thus was it said that SALT, or more generally detente, “lies buried in the sands of Ogaden.”

Exploring why the U.S.-Soviet detente of the mid-1970s was side-tracked by such seemingly obscure and peripheral issues as the regional crisis in the Horn of Africa was one purpose of the “Carter-Brezhnev Project.” Spearheaded by Dr. James G. Blight of the Center for Foreign Policy Development at the Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, the Carter-Brezhnev Project gathered scholars, former Soviet and American officials, and newly-released documentation for a series of oral history conferences to examine the reasons behind the collapse of detente, and whether those events suggested any lessons for current and future Russian-American relations. Among the scholarly organizations supporting the Project’s efforts to obtain fresh evidence from American, Russian, and other archives were the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository based at George Washington University, and the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), based at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

In this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin, we are pleased to present a sampling of the Russian and East German documents on the 1977-78 Horn of Africa Crisis that were gathered for the Carter-Brezhnev conference on U.S.-Soviet rivalry in the Third World, held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on 23-26 March 1995. (A much smaller selection was included in a briefing book assembled by the National Security Archive and CWIHP for use during the conference.)

Both the Russian and East German documents were obtained and translated via the collective efforts of the National Security Archive, CWIHP, and the CFPD. Most of the Russian documents printed below emanated from the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD in its Russian acronym), the repository for the post-1952 records of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU), located in the former Central Committee headquarters in Old Square in Moscow; some additional documents came from the Archive of the President, Russian Federation (APRF); all were specially declassified by Russian authorities for the Carter-Brezhnev Project. For their assistance in working out the details of locating and obtaining these materials, CWIHP would like to thank N.G. Tomilina, Director of TsKhSD, and her staff, and Vladislav M. Zubok and Malcolm Byrne of the National Security Archive.

The East German documents printed below are drawn from a larger collection obtained from the East Berlin-based archive of the former ruling party of the German Democratic Republic, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), and translated from German, by Christian F. Ostermann, a researcher based at the National Security Archive and the incoming CWIHP Associate Director. These East German documents include reports of communications with Soviet and Cuban officials—including a lengthy excerpt from the transcript of an April 1977 conversation between East German leader Erich Honecker and visiting Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who had recently attempted a mediation effort between Somalia and Ethiopia—and accounts of an abortive East German effort in 1978 to mediate the ongoing dispute between the central Ethiopian government and the separatist Eritrean guerrilla movement. As with the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, both contestants in the Ethiopia-Eritrea clash professed allegiance to socialism, and Moscow hoped to subsume their differences in order to consolidate an anti-Western bloc on the Horn of Africa.

All of the photocopied Russian and East German documents printed below, and many other, still-untranslated East-bloc documents (as well as declassified U.S. government documents) concerning the Horn Crisis, are on file and available for scholarly research at the National Security Archive. The Archive is located on the 7th floor of the Gelman Library, 2130 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20037, and can be reached at (202) 994-7000 (telephone); (202) 994-7005 (fax); and nsarchiv@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu (e-mail).

To assess the significance of these materials for understanding the Horn of Africa Crisis, the CWIHP Bulletin has solicited commentaries from three scholars: **Ermias Abebe**, an Ethiopian-born scholar who obtained his Master’s degree at Moscow State University and recently received his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, has completed a dissertation on Soviet foreign policy in the Third World in the 1970s, using Russian, American, and Ethiopian sources; **Paul B. Henze**, author of *The Horn of Africa from War to Peace* (Macmillan, 1991) and during the Carter Administration a staff member of the National Security Council, and currently a researcher affiliated with the Washington, D.C.-office of the Rand Corporation; and **Christian F. Ostermann**, currently completing a dissertation for the University of Hamburg on U.S.-East German relations in the 1950s, is a researcher based at the National Security Archive and the incoming CWIHP Associate Director. Their commentaries begin below, preceding the section of translated East-bloc documents.

In the future, CWIHP hopes to organize additional activities, including a scholarly conference or workshop, to gather further sources and perspectives on the international history of the Horn of Africa Crisis. These would include still-missing pieces of the puzzle from the Russian and American archives, materials from the region such as Ethiopia and Somalia, and, if possible, Cuban records that could clarify Havana’s actions and motivations during the crisis.

—James G. Hershberg

**THE HORN, THE COLD WAR,
AND DOCUMENTS FROM THE
FORMER EAST-BLOC:
AN ETHIOPIAN VIEW**

by Ermias Abebe

The materials presented here as part of a collection of recently declassified documents from the former Eastern bloc *begin* to shed invaluable light on the intricacies and evolution of former Soviet, East German, and Cuban interpretations of and influence on the politics of the Horn of Africa between 1977-1978. The word *begin* is emphasized because, at the same time, these documents are far from comprehensive in that a number of very critical events and developments during this period find scant or no mention. Some of these issues will be mentioned in this commentary. Nevertheless, reviewing these documents, it will be difficult indeed to underplay the crucial significance of the East-West standoff which served as the context in which the former USSR and its allies comprehended and attempted to shape the politics of the region. Ultimately, this prism led to the gradual choice of cultivating close ties and rendering decisive support to the military government in Ethiopia beginning in 1976. In turn, this choice molded that regime and guaranteed its survival until 1991 when only the end of the Cold War and diminished Soviet support coupled with the Eritrean and Tigrean liberation front victories led to its collapse.

The publication of these documents should therefore serve as a valuable stimulus for international scholarship on superpower involvement in Africa during the Cold War and also arouse scholars on Ethiopia in particular to reexamine and enrich conventional wisdom about the political history of the Mengistu era. Furthermore, the fact that the country now has a completely different leadership which is not tainted with the atrocities of Mengistu and the Derg means, at least theoretically, that it will have nothing to lose by collaborating in international research efforts and releasing pertinent documents from Ethiopian archives (unlike Angola for example). On the contrary, such a col-

laboration would not only enable the new Ethiopia to take deserved credit from the international scholarly community, but also to reap the intellectual reward of a better understanding of a regime that it fought so gallantly and with immense sacrifice to topple.

My specific comments on these documents will focus on three major themes—Soviet influence on: (a) the military regime; (b) the Ethio-Somali war and; (c) the Eritrean secessionist movement.

I. Soviet relations with the PMAC

Soviet interest in winning a position of strength on the Horn of Africa dates from the 1960s. Probably, the major explanations are related to the area's strategic value. First, two important international confrontations cut across the Horn: the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Sino-Soviet rivalry, whose geographic expression involved the whole area stretching from the Western Pacific, to Southeast and South Asia, and into the Indian Ocean littoral. Also, the Horn's strategic location along East-West communication and transportation routes enables it to serve as a critical vantage point to command or interdict oil shipments from the Middle East and elsewhere. Furthermore, in the post-colonial setting, newly liberated African states had increasingly become targets for Marxist-Leninist ideological expansion to alienate "Western imperialist states." As Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev had once remarked, "Africa [had become] a main field of battle for communism."¹ Moreover, in one of the documents published here, Cuba's Fidel Castro reinforces this idea in an April 1977 meeting with his East German counterpart, Erich Honecker, by stating that "in Africa we can inflict a severe defeat on the entire reactionary imperialist policy. We can free Africa from the influence of the USA and of the Chinese . . . Ethiopia has a great revolutionary potential . . . So there is a great counterweight to [Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat's betrayal in Egypt . . . We must have an integrated strategy for the whole African continent." Thus, the Soviet Union along with its

allies apparently hoped to anchor themselves firmly on the Horn in an attempt to position themselves to play important political and/or military roles in the whole volatile region.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974, Moscow was slow to react to the overthrow of imperial rule and the military takeover in Addis Ababa led by the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) or Derg. This hesitancy might be explained by a legitimate Soviet reluctance to antagonize Somalia, especially in light of recent setbacks the Sudan and Egypt, where Moscow had lost influence in spite of massive economic and military aid to these countries. It must be remembered here that Somalia had a territorial dispute with Ethiopia over the Ogaden and that the USSR, at this time, had already cultivated a strong presence in Somalia. That presence was cemented with Gen. Mohammed Said Barre's successful military coup in October 1969 after which he turned his country's orientation sharply toward Moscow, signing a Soviet-Somali Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1974. Under the treaty, the Somali government was generously supplied with military aid and the Soviets acquired access to the strategic port of Berbera. With all this at stake, Moscow had reason to be prudent in assessing the PMAC's reliability before considering a new commitment.

The PMAC, on the other hand, had two serious problems of its own which inhibited it from seeking an immediate embrace from Moscow. One was that initially it was unclear about its ideological preference and international orientation. An illuminating account of this confusion is provided by Major Dawit Wolde Giorgis, a high ranking official of the military regime who later defected to the United States and wrote a book. In it he stated that the PMAC was so "ignorant in the realm of ideology that at one point in the early stage of the revolution delegations were sent to Tanzania, Yugoslavia, China, and India to shop for one for Ethiopia."² It is important to note that the Soviet Union was apparently not even considered as a possible source of ideological

inspiration by the military rulers at an early stage.

The other problem was that the Council engaged in three major successive rounds of bloody power struggles before Mengistu emerged as the uncontested leader. In providing a very short account of these struggles, an important point to underline at the outset is that unlike some of the contenders he ultimately managed to annihilate, Mengistu had neither educational exposure to nor interest in communist ideology and/or the Soviet Union prior to the PMAC's formation. As he admitted in one interview, his first encounter with Russians happened only after the revolution. Perhaps one of his phenomenal abilities lay in his capacity to understand quickly and adopt new ideas when they served a useful purpose in his quest for power.

The first round of weeding out opponents was carried out in November 1974 when Gen. Aman Andom, the first PMAC chairman, along with a few other members of the Council and more than 50 former high-ranking officials, were summarily executed, shocking both Ethiopians and the international community. The second round of executions occurred in July 1976. This time the victims were active educated officers within the PMAC, like Major Sisay Habte and Lieutenants Bewiket Kassa and Sileshi Beyene, who maintained connections with radical elements among university students, teachers, and labor organizers and who were instrumental in initially steering the Council to the Left from its original nationalist orientation. A major restructuring of the PMAC in December 1976, when its members voted to strip Mengistu of power and institute "collective leadership," served as the prelude to the third and decisive round of killings. The architects of the restructuring included respected PMAC members like the nominal chairman who succeeded Aman Andom: Gen. Teferi Banti, Maj. Alemayehu Haile and Capt. Mogus Wolde Michael. Again, especially the last two, like those mentioned earlier, were important figures in introducing socialism to the Council. However, on 3 February 1977 Mengistu embarked on a sudden and swift retali-

ation. With the help of the chief of the palace security force commander, he essentially carried out a mafia-style coup by simply ambushing and executing the ringleaders of the restructuring who were unsuspectingly preparing for a regular Council meeting in the palace grounds. The following day he was "unanimously voted" chairman by the remaining PMAC members.

The documents from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Socialist Unity Party of [East] Germany (SED) presented here begin with activities dating from early February 1977. Notably, the first two documents, the memorandum of conversation between Soviet Counselor-Minister in Ethiopia S. Sinitsin with the Political Counselor of the US Embassy in Ethiopia Herbert Malin as well as the CPSU's Third African Department Report on Somali-Ethiopian territorial disputes are both dated February 2, i.e., one day before Mengistu's bloody coup. It will be recalled that at the time it was widely reported that the USSR Ambassador to Ethiopia Anatolii Ratanov was the first person to congratulate Mengistu immediately after the carnage, leading to speculation by some Western authors that the Soviets might have had a hand in the affair by providing intelligence support or, at least, had prior information and might have provided tacit approval before the killings occurred.³ If that were the case, certainly these documents shed no light. In fact, the first document distinctly mentions the visit of an Ethiopian delegation to Moscow in July 1976 and the resulting joint Soviet-Ethiopian communique as the prelude to closer ties between the two countries after the Ethiopian revolution. On the Ethiopian side, that delegation was led by Mogus, one of the casualties of Mengistu's coup. It seems the Soviets would have been unlikely to highlight this information had they known about the impending events. Of course, one can also argue that given that the Soviet Counselor-Minister was dealing with his American counterpart, disinformation would have been the order of the day.

It might be valuable to point out a possible Soviet displeasure with the

Ethiopian leadership prior to the coup which is implied between the lines of one of the discussions of the CPSU Third African Department Report. This refers to a late-1976 Cuban and South Yemeni initiative to provide mediation in the Ethio-Somali dispute. The report mentions that the Somali government, while not rejecting the proposal, had spoken out in favor of including direct Soviet participation in the negotiations. Ethiopia, on the other hand, the report notes, regarded the mediation initiative favorably, but "did not express an analogous wish" (about Soviet participation) and thus the Cubans and Yemenis (on their own) were taking diplomatic steps to organize mediation. Could this have been a factor causing Soviet apprehension about the Ethiopian leadership's reliability prior to Mengistu's consolidation of power? The answer at this point can only be conjecture.

The first head of state from the communist bloc to meet with Mengistu after his coup was Castro. He visited Addis Ababa on March 14-15, just a little more than a month later. On March 16 he then flew across the Red Sea to Aden, South Yemen, to co-chair a joint Cuban-Yemeni mediation effort to settle the Ethio-Somali dispute to which Somali's Barre as well as Mengistu were invited. It is not clear from the documents whether this meeting had been prearranged before the coup or whether it was hastily scheduled after it. Whatever the case, a few weeks later, on 3 April, Castro went to East Berlin to report about his African mission and consult with the East German leader Erich Honecker. The transcript of that meeting presented here records Castro's vivid first impressions about Mengistu, revealing the latter's apparent success in winning over both the heart and support of the Cuban leader in such a relatively short time. Castro spoke of Mengistu as a "quiet, honest, and convinced . . . revolutionary leader . . . an intellectual personality who showed his wisdom on February 3." His massacre is portrayed and condoned as "a turning point in the development of the Ethiopian revolution when . . . a consequential decision was made to meet the challenge by rightists" in the PMAC.

To the extent that the communist states shared information with each other and with Moscow to devise and coordinate policy, as it is assumed they did, Castro's account provided an excellent report card for Mengistu. Furthermore, as it is known from other sources that Castro later flew to Moscow to report on his trip, one may presume that he presented the same glowing assessment of Mengistu to the Soviet leadership.

Mengistu also indulges in a diplomatic contribution to widen the emerging rift between Somalia and the socialist states by discrediting the revolutionary potential of its leadership. In one record of conversation held on March 18, his head of foreign affairs, Maj. Berhanu Bayeh, quotes the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* to point out to Sinitin the possibility of Somalia joining Sudan, Egypt and Syria in a unified political command. He adds that Barre had been on record declaring that Somalia achieved its revolution independently and can acquire help from other countries besides the Soviet Union and its allies. Given the recent Soviet loss of Egypt and Sudan, this information was probably intended to arouse Moscow's apprehension.

Supporting his own professed commitment to Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet Union with practical deeds, at the end of the following April Mengistu ordered the closure of the U.S. communications station in Asmara, the U.S. Information Service (USIS) center, and the American military assistance advisory offices, and abrogated the Ethio-U.S. Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement—the official treaty of alliance with the United States dating from 1953. It is also remarkable how Mengistu was apparently successful in projecting himself to the Soviets as a genuine, pro-Soviet, revolutionary leader constantly challenged by nationalist elements within his own Council. In one May 1978 conversation report, Rotislav Ulianovskii, an influential senior Third World policy analyst in the CPSU, instructs his East German counterpart Friedel Trappen, arguing:

Mengistu deserves to be regarded by us as a man who represents internation-

alist positions. By contrast to him, Berhanu Bayeh and Fikre Selassie as well as Legesse Asfaw and others are marked by nationalism although they are faithful to him . . . I emphasize again, we have to apply maximum caution, circumspection and tactfulness toward Mengistu so that the nationalists will not grasp him by the throat.

According to the views of many Ethiopians, including former insiders in the Mengistu regime such as Dawit (cited above), nothing could be further from the truth except for the remark on loyalty. First of all, between February and November 1977 Mengistu had consolidated absolute power. Secondly, he was raised and trained in the traditional Amharised Ethiopian military tradition and therefore, by background, the most ardent nationalist of them all. After the revolution he had repeatedly and successfully maneuvered between dressing up as an ideologue and as a nationalist whenever each was politically expedient. Mengistu evidently fostered this misperception apparently to bolster his own image (as an internationalist) and, at the same time, to limit demands and pressures from the socialist community.

Interestingly, Mengistu's regime repeatedly employed the "China card" to attract Soviet support. In one document discussing Ethiopia's desire to acquire U.S.-manufactured arms from Vietnam with Soviet help, Berhanu emphasizes that "in contrast to the past the PMAC intends to consider this issue with the Vietnamese directly, rather than running to the People's Republic of China [PRC] for mediation." The reference to the past alluded to the leftist elements of the Military Council who were liquidated in the coup. In another conversation report, in July 1977, Cuba's military specialist in Addis Ababa, General Arnoldo Ochoa, conveys to Soviet Ambassador Ratanov that Mengistu had personally assured him about the decline in Ethiopian-Chinese relations following the PMAC's finding that the PRC was providing military assistance to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Mengistu, according to Ochoa, had explained the decision to limit all relations

with Beijing to the minimum and to devise measures against Chinese ideological penetration in Ethiopia. That same month, yet another conversation record, this time between Mengistu and Ratanov, reveals Soviet apprehension about the dissemination of anti-Soviet (Maoist) literature in Addis Ababa. That September, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister Felleke Gedle Giorgis "especially dwelled on the Chinese position on the Ethiopian Revolution" in his talks with Ratanov. Admitting to PRC economic aid at the initial stage of the revolution, he noted the changing Chinese stand as the revolution deepened (perhaps alluding to the forging of closer ties with the USSR). China then began to render comprehensive assistance to Somalia during the military conflict. By February 1978, according to a joint report by the CPSU Third Africa Department and the Political Department of the GDR Embassy in Moscow, the Soviets noted (presumably with satisfaction) Beijing's hostile attitudes toward the Ethiopian leadership as well as the minimal popular support enjoyed by pro-Maoist groups in the country.

Another noteworthy issue discussed in three documents concerns "Operation Torch"—an alleged imperialist conspiracy spearheaded by the CIA to assassinate Ethiopian leaders and destabilize the revolution in September-October 1977 with the help of regional forces hostile to the country. Again allegedly, Ethiopian authorities received a letter revealing the pending plot from unknown sources in Africa and then conveyed this threat to the ambassadors of the socialist countries. A few days later, the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Dawit Wolde Giorgis, visited the Soviet embassy and provided a copy of the letter to Ratanov. Interestingly, Dawit mentions this incident in his book.⁴ He notes an unsuccessful attempt by the Ethiopian government to verify the letter through follow-up inquiries and describes the great sense of panic and suspicion it had created in the Foreign Office. Moreover, while he alludes to the possibility that the letter may have been fabricated, he unfortunately does not state a likely source. The mysterious

letter provides the names of two American officials, alleged masterminds of the plot, with their ranks and positions at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. If it is true, as Paul Henze asserts in this publication, that even the names are fictitious, it is odd that the Ethiopian authorities convened a socialist ambassadors' meeting in panic instead of easily verifying through elementary diplomatic inquiry and concluding that it had been a fabrication. The theory of a charade—a make-believe drama enacted on false information—will thus have to include the Ethiopians as well as Soviet authorities as actors if it is to be considered a plausible explanation.

In addition, a few other documents provide accounts of some early reservations the Soviet Union and its allies had about Mengistu's handling of certain issues. It should be noted that in earlier Western writings, some of these reservations were usually associated with a later period, after Gorbachev assumed power in Moscow in 1985. But as early as December 1977, a conversation between the East Germans and Ratanov points toward the need for Ethiopia to adopt a mixed economy along the lines of the Soviet NEP (New Economic Program) of the 1920s. The leadership's perception of the national bourgeoisie as an enemy of the revolution and the alienation and exclusion of this group as well as of the liberal-minded functionaries of the state apparatus from the economy and national life is criticized as a dangerous trend with negative consequences. In another conversation the following February, a central player in the CPSU's Africa policy group, Boris Ponomarev, expressed his concern over extremes in the Ethiopian Revolution—the mass executions of prisoners and the government's Red Terror—directing the transmittal of these concerns to Mengistu using various channels.

Finally in this section, the issue of Moscow's relentless prodding of Mengistu to set up a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party to institutionalize the revolution as well as to transform the country into a reliable Soviet ally is a subject addressed by many authors and the focus of my own study.⁵ Primarily

because of Mengistu's resistance, and to the disappointment of the Soviets, the party didn't come into existence until 1984. Two documents presented here refer to Soviet anxiety about repeated delays from the Ethiopian side in accepting the arrival of "a specially selected group of experienced CPSU comrades" to help in the party formation process. One of them notes that "Mengistu apparently has no concept of the cooperation with the advisers [and that] it is necessary to convince him that they could be a real help and relief." Obviously, at this early stage in the revolution, the Soviets did not realize that Mengistu was intentionally preventing Moscow's infiltration into his power structure before completing a prolonged process of weeding out potential contenders and adversaries.

II. Ethio-Somali War

A substantial number of the documents presented here address the Soviet bloc's involvement in the conflict. Indeed, for Moscow, Barre's aggression against Ethiopia, which began in early 1977 under the guise of a Western Somali Liberation Movement and which escalated into full-scale intervention the following July, was both a welcome event and a potentially dangerous development. On one hand, it provided the Soviets with the opportunity to rapidly penetrate Ethiopia, the prized state of the Horn, while, on the other hand, it entailed a potentially painful risk of losing another state where Moscow had already built a presence: Somalia. The documents help in tracing Moscow's policy in the region which began in 1976 as a strategy of courting "Socialist Ethiopia" without disturbing its longstanding friendship with Somalia. By 1978 it had gone through a complete somersault with the Soviet ejection from Mogadishu and its entrenchment in Addis Ababa after a massive supply of arms which decided the outcome of the conflict in favor of Ethiopia. My comments, however, will only briefly focus on three particular issues.

One is on the 16 March 1977 Cuban-Yemen effort at creating a Marxist-Leninist confederation consisting of

Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Yemen. In his meeting with Honecker the following month, Castro provides a detailed report about the attitudes of the two leaders, Mengistu and Barre, toward the proposal. Mengistu is referred to in glowing terms while Barre is described as a chauvinist whose principal idea is nationalism, not socialism. The report vividly shows Castro trapped as a victim of his own ideology. Having erroneously assumed an absolute connection between perceived global trends—depicting socialism as the world's dynamic force—and the local situation in the Horn, he had expected a successful outcome to his efforts. His sharp disappointment in Barre's personality, on which the report dwells, should have been subordinated to the more crucial realization that national and ethnic rivalries peculiar to the region had doomed the confederation from the outset. Also in this document, the Cuban leader, perhaps for the first time, forcefully raised the impending dilemma facing the Soviet bloc in the Horn of Africa. He tells Honecker, "I see a great danger . . . if the socialist countries help Ethiopia, they will lose Siad Barre's friendship. If they don't, the Ethiopian revolution will founder." Faced with an either/or situation within six-eight months, Moscow bet on Ethiopia at the risk of irretrievably losing Somalia.

Another issue warranting mention is a probable justification for the Kremlin's massive air- and sealift of military equipment (worth about one billion dollars), 12,000 Cuban combat troops, and about 1500 Soviet military advisers to Ethiopia in November-December 1977. This measure immediately followed Somalia's unilateral abrogation of the 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR. Why was such an overwhelming show of force necessary? Moscow's apparent objective in this spectacular move was to guarantee the swift and decisive end of the Ethio-Somali war with a quick and unconditional withdrawal of Somali forces from Ethiopian territory. Two documents, the joint memorandum of the CPSU Third Africa Department and the Political Department of the GDR Embassy in Moscow, and the So-

viet Foreign Ministry/CPSU CC International Department report on the Somali-Ethiopian conflict, shed light on a probable motive: “to avoid a situation analogous to the one in the Middle East”—where Sadat was taking his own spectacular initiative in making an unprecedented visit to Jerusalem—from arising in the Horn.

According to the documents, the Soviet Union wanted to avert at all costs the internationalization of the conflict and the possible involvement of the UN Security Council which it believed would be in the interest of Western powers. Such an outcome, Moscow argued, would be possible if an armistice were reached without the withdrawal of Somali troops from occupied Ethiopian territory while Western powers simultaneously pushed for Security Council involvement. A takeover by the Security Council, moreover, would delay a resolution of the conflict in a similar fashion as in the Middle East, possibly increasing the danger for superpower confrontation as the West and other unfriendly states demanded Soviet exit from the region as a precondition and blame it for causing the conflict. The significance of this logic is better appreciated when recalling Sadat’s dramatic announcement in early November that he would visit Israel. It was a move that crushed plans for multilateral talks on the Middle East at Geneva and suddenly removed the Soviets from a direct role in the Arab-Israeli peace talks. In the face of such a setback, Moscow apparently showed its determination to anchor just at the other end of the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia in a desperate attempt to balance, in some degree, the loss of influence in Egypt by consolidating a strong presence in the greater Middle East conflict zone.

The final issue of interest in this section addresses one of Mengistu’s first reactions about the possible Soviet use of Ethiopian port facilities in the likely event of the Somalia’s denying Moscow access to the port of Berbera. He addresses this issue with Ratanov in a conversation dated 29 July 1977. He, interestingly, doesn’t provide a clear cut commitment to provide the USSR access to its ports. Instead he states an

understanding of the Soviet dilemma: rendering military assistance to Ethiopia at the risk of losing its opportunity in Somalia. He also articulates Ethiopia’s revolutionary indebtedness and obligation to take Moscow’s interest in the region into account. The document doesn’t make clear whether he was responding to a Soviet request; but, particularly if he raised the issue on his own initiative, the fact he makes such an indirect commitment appears to have been subtle and timely maneuver to attract Moscow toward Ethiopia.

III. The Eritrean Secessionists

An interesting paradox in the Ethiopian revolution can be noted. With the exception of the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) (an entity associated with the remnants of the Selassie era), the other four major organizations which struggled to topple Mengistu’s regime all ironically professed allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, just like their principal adversary. While two of them, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All Ethiopian Workers’ Movement (MEISON), all but perished during the violent confrontations of the late 1970s, the other two, the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) ultimately succeeded in coordinating their efforts to renounce Marxism after the late 1980s, dislodge Mengistu from power in 1991, and establish two independent states—Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia—by 1993-1994.

To what extent these various (previously?) revolutionary organizations had forged parallel relations with Moscow and other socialist countries remains an interesting question to explore. The EPRP claims to have established contacts with the CPSU as early as 1972.⁶ MEISON had purportedly developed links through associations with European Communist parties in the 1970s.⁷ Until the Ethiopian revolution, the EPLF had been openly assisted by countries like Cuba, possibly offering indirect ties to Moscow. The TPLF, as an organization founded after Ethiopia joined the Soviet orbit, probably didn’t

have any relations with the USSR, but it went on record as advocating Albanian-style socialism, thus relations with Albania or China are not altogether inconceivable. The few documents presented here shed some light on Soviet and East German links with the EPLF and its much smaller rival organization in Eritrea—the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF)—in the context of the two socialist countries’ efforts at facilitating mediation with the Mengistu regime. In particular, in 1978 the East Germans had arranged two direct high-level talks between Mengistu’s representative, Berhanu Bayeh, and EPLF leader Issaias Afewerki, the results of which were promptly communicated by Honecker to Brezhnev.

What is clear from these documents is the fact that the EPLF had apparently maintained well-established contacts with the SED and Issaias talked directly with Honecker as a leader of a revolutionary party. This level of contact may well not have been to Mengistu’s liking. On the other hand, Moscow apparently exhibited sensitivity to the views in Addis Ababa in that the ELF and its leader Ahmed Mohammed Nasser were less closely linked with Moscow through the USSR’s Solidarity Committee. Moreover, in one of the documents, Ulianovskii rejects an East German proposal that Issaias meet with him in Moscow so that the CPSU could exert pressure on the EPLF to compromise with Mengistu. Nevertheless, it is clear that both Berlin and Moscow had apparently coordinated a concerted effort at finding a political solution to the Eritrean problem by pressuring both the government of Mengistu as well as the rebel movements toward constructive dialogue. The results, however, had not been encouraging.

In conclusion, the documents presented here are indeed important contributions to the study of the politics of the Horn during 1977-1978 in the context of the Cold War. Their value is not so much in the amount of “new” information they present, although there is some. Rather, they are priceless in providing unique first-hand insight into the perceptions and attitudes of the major

actors involved in the decisions that shaped political outcomes.

Interestingly, the documents from the Russian archives appear to have been carefully selected to elide significant “blank spots” even on the issues and period covered. By contrast, the former East German materials, though limited in number, seem more insightful in the concentrated details they provide on one issue in particular: the Ethio-Eritrean high-level mediation.

Nevertheless, within the two-year period covered in these documents there are significant issues that find scant coverage. From the Soviet side these include materials pertaining to Moscow’s intelligence assessment and possible involvement during the Ethiopian power struggle; relations with organizations other than the PMAC; military reports from General Petrov and others in the Ogaden; and early military planning involvement in Eritrea. From the East German side, materials related to its assistance in restructuring the Ethiopian security services would be of high interest. Beyond 1978, Soviet and other socialist countries’ involvement in the Ethiopian vanguard party formation process would, of course, be of critical importance.

¹ Cited in P. Margushin, “Sovetskii Soyuz v Afrike,” *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, 4 October 1979.

² Dawit Wolde Giorgis, *Red Tears: Famine, War, and Revolution in Ethiopia*, (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1989), 21.

³ Robert Patman, *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 193; Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 206.

⁴ Giorgis, *Red Tears*, 35-36.

⁵ Ermias Abebe, “The Vanguard Party: Imperial Instrument of Soviet-Third World Policy (1976-1986),” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland (College Park), 1994.

⁶ See EPRP founding member Kiflu Tadesse’s *The Generation*, (Silver Spring, MD: Independent Publishers, 1993), 98.

⁷ Bereket Habte Selassie, “Political Leadership in Crisis: The Ethiopian Case” *Horn of Africa* 3:1 (Jan.-Mar. 1980), 7.

MOSCOW, MENGISTU, AND THE HORN: DIFFICULT CHOICES FOR THE KREMLIN

by Paul B. Henze

The Russian and East German documents reproduced here constitute a useful contribution to the history of the Horn of Africa during the critical events of 1977-78. They provide insights into the Soviet relationship with the authoritarian leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia at that time, Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam and President Mohammed Siad Barre, as well as into the motivations of these men and some of their associates.

Both Mengistu and Siad Barre were stubborn and ambitious leaders who confronted the Kremlin with difficult choices, which it tried to avoid for as long as possible. Siad comes across as a more blatant liar than Mengistu, who appears to have been more genuinely devoted to “socialism.” While Siad seems totally mendacious and devious in his manipulation of the Soviets, Mengistu is shown with his back to the wall. He was determined to win Soviet support by vigorously professing his loyalty to “socialism” and making clear his readiness to serve Soviet aims throughout the Horn and in the world at large. The documents occasionally reveal Soviet concern that Mengistu and his Derg associates were moving too fast, and these concerns were sometimes expressed to him. But as the Horn crisis developed, they became more concerned about preserving Mengistu’s power than Siad’s. The reason, undoubtedly, is that Ethiopia was a much more important country than Somalia. The Soviets originally established themselves in Somalia because they were unable to do so in Ethiopia.

To those knowledgeable of the details of Ethiopian history during this period, enthusiastic Soviet references to the “decisive action” Mengistu took on 3 February 1977 are noteworthy. In spite of repeated protestations of peaceful desires, these references show that Soviets had no reservations about approving violence as a means of settling differences. Though there are no ex-

PLICIT references to this action in these documents, Soviet Ambassador Anatolii P. Ratanov was reliably reported at the time to have been the first to congratulate Mengistu after the spectacular bloodbath in the Derg when several challengers of Mengistu, most notably Head of State Teferi Bante, were shot. As a result, Mengistu emerged into the open as the dominant figure as Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), i.e. the Derg.

The documents provide useful information on the activities of Cuba as junior partner to the Soviets in Ethiopia during this period. A long near-verbatim report from the archives of the former German Democratic Republic of a meeting between Fidel Castro and Erich Honecker on Castro’s return from Africa in early April 1977 gives us vivid detail that confirms what has long been generally known of Castro’s unsuccessful effort to mediate the developing Horn crisis in mid-March 1977. A subsequent briefing by Soviet Ambassador Ratanov of Cuban Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa provides a remarkably frank, and not entirely positive, appraisal of Ethiopia’s military and political predicament and performance as of mid-summer 1977.

The Soviet Union was remarkably uncreative in its efforts to deal with the situation provoked by Siad Barre’s attack on Ethiopia. Siad felt his way cautiously at first, operating behind a facade of what he claimed were only guerrilla operations. But by July 1977, Somalia was openly invading Ethiopia with regular military forces.¹ Nevertheless, Somali officials adhered to the pretense well into 1978 that the operation was entirely the initiative of guerrillas. Even though Soviet officials in both Somalia and Ethiopia had to be well aware of what was happening, Moscow—on the surface at least—persisted on the course adopted early in the year: trying to bring the Somalis and Ethiopians together to compose their differences. Long reports by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Leonid Ilychev of almost four weeks of meetings with a Somali delegation in Moscow from late July through the third week of August chronicle an elaborate

charade of negotiations. Unfortunately the documents available to us here do not include parallel reports of dealings with the Ethiopian delegation that was in Moscow during the same period, but it appears that the Somalis and the Ethiopians never even engaged in preliminary face-to-face talks. The reason why is easy to see in written statements each delegation gave the Soviets of its country's position, for neither left any room for compromise or even discussion with the other.

While the independence of erstwhile French colony of Djibouti caused immediate worry, both Ethiopia and Somalia behaved with caution. Ratanov did not react to an offer by Mengistu to support intervention in Djibouti. Ethiopia lacked the strength to intervene alone.

The biggest problem looming in the background of the discussions reported in these documents is Eritrea. It was already the most intractable problem of all for Moscow in its relations with Mengistu. Ethiopian military performance in meeting the Somali invasion was inhibited by the predicament which Mengistu had got himself into in Eritrea. The Soviets were not impressed with the performance of Mengistu's army in Eritrea. An East German document from December 1977 reveals what appears to be Ambassador Ratanov's irritation at Mengistu's intransigence on Eritrea as well as the hope that somehow a basis for negotiation with the rebel movement there might be developed. This became a major Soviet aim during the next decade and led to repeated East German efforts (and some Italian Communist attempts) to bring Eritrean and Ethiopian Marxists together.

In response to Mengistu's urgent pleading, the Soviets agreed during July 1977 to send in urgently needed transport equipment to enable the Ethiopians to utilize some of the tanks and guns the Soviets had already provided as a result of agreements reached during Mengistu's December 1976 and May 1977 visits to Moscow, but the Kremlin was still apparently hoping to limit its commitment. Politburo minutes of 4 and 11 August 1977 confirm decisions

to provide Ethiopia support to defend itself against Somalia, but details have not been declassified. This, nevertheless, appears to be the point at which, de facto, Moscow finally made an irrevocable decision to opt for Ethiopia over Somalia.

Whether or not Ambassador Ratanov agreed with Moscow's continued insistence on further efforts to bring the Somalis and Ethiopians together in negotiations at "the expert level," he followed Moscow's orders and repeated this position as late as 23 August 1977 in a meeting with Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia Perez Novoa. The Soviets were even more hesitant on the question of manpower, for the main purpose of this meeting with the Cuban envoy was to chastise him for permitting Cuban Gen. Ochoa to promise Mengistu that more Cuban technicians would be coming: "The decision to send Cuban personnel to Ethiopia does not depend on Havana, but on Moscow." Ratanov expressed the Soviet fear that a large-scale introduction of Cubans into Ethiopia could provoke the Eritreans or Somalis to call in troops from supportive Arab countries such as Egypt.

Taken as a whole, these Russian documents seem to have been made available to give a picture of a well-intentioned and relatively benign Soviet Union confronted with a situation it neither anticipated nor desired. The Soviets are shown to be surprised by the crisis, reluctant to choose between Ethiopia and Somalia, and trying to delay hard decisions as long as possible. This does not fit with the general atmosphere of Third World activism characteristic of the Soviet Union at this time. While there seems to be no reason to question the authenticity of the documents themselves, there are obviously large gaps in this documentation. We find nothing about differing views among Soviet officials or various elements in the Soviet bureaucracy, nor about different interpretations of developments between the Soviet establishments in Mogadishu² and Addis Ababa. We see no reflection of options and courses of action that must have been discussed in the Soviet embassies in the Horn and in Moscow as the crisis in-

tensified. We get no comparative evaluations of officials with whom the Soviets were dealing in Mogadishu and Addis Ababa.

The documents also lack any direct reference to intelligence. It is hard to believe that Soviet officials did not receive extensive KGB and GRU reporting from agents in both Somalia and Ethiopia. There is, in fact, good reason to believe that the Soviets were re-insuring themselves during this period by maintaining contacts with political groups opposed to Mengistu in Ethiopia as well as opponents of Siad Barre in Somalia. They, the East Germans, the Cubans, and perhaps other socialist countries must also have had contacts among Eritrean factions. We do find tantalizing references to opposition to the Derg and to the strain under which Mengistu found himself as a result. At times the Soviets seem to be more apprehensive of Mengistu's staying power than U.S. officials were at the time.

The final portion of Ratanov's 18 March 1977 meeting with Berhanu Bayeh sheds indirect light on attitudes among the Ethiopian public. Major Berhanu asks to have the Soviets arrange for a scholarship for his younger brother to study in Moscow and explains that the young man has been unable to complete his work at a prestigious Addis Ababa secondary school because, as the relative of a Derg member, he became the object of harassment by other students. Even at this relatively early stage of the Derg's history, its popularity with the student population seems to have been quite low.

Nevertheless, most of the basic questions about Soviet policies and calculations during 1977 which I identified as still needing clarification in my discussion of this period in a 1991 study³ remain open so far as these documents go. The Russian documents stop, for the most part, at the point when hard Soviet decisions about action and implementation began to be made: at the end of September 1977. For example, they shed no light on how these decisions were arrived at and carried out, or how risks were assessed. The massive airlift and sealift of Cuban troops and equipment that startled the

world from November 1977 onward, or the decision to send General V. Petrov to Ethiopia to oversee operations against the Somali forces, get scant mention, as does Mengistu's "closed" or secret trip to Moscow in October 1977 at which the imminent Soviet-Cuban military effort was undoubtedly the chief topic of conversation. [Ed. note: Both are mentioned in passing in the 3 April 1978 Soviet Foreign Ministry background report on Soviet-Ethiopian relations printed below; a generally-worded Soviet report to the East German leadership on Mengistu's trip is also included.] Likewise these documents are devoid of reference to the decision to shore up Ethiopian forces by transferring South Yemeni armored units to Ethiopia in late summer 1977 to blunt the Somali advance.

The most curious aspect of this batch of documents concern three that deal with "Operation Torch"—an alleged American plot to assassinate Mengistu and attack Ethiopia from Sudan and Kenya. Ethiopian leaders presented what they described as documentation of the plot to Soviet-bloc diplomats in early September 1977, and claimed that it was planned to be launched on 1 October 1977. The text of the description of the plot, supposedly conceived and directed out of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, reads like a fourth-rate pulp thriller. Nothing in it, including the names of the American officers who were supposedly directing it, bears any relation to known or plausible facts. Perhaps the oddest feature of "Operation Torch" is its lack of direct connection with Somalia or with Eritrean rebels.

If the Soviets actually took this "report" seriously, why did they not challenge all the countries supposedly cooperating in mounting it—Kenya, Sudan, and the United States? It bears all the marks of a disinformation operation of the kind that the Soviets (often through Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia) frequently undertook during this period. Whatever specific purpose it was designed to serve is unclear. One possibility is that it may have been intended to heighten the paranoia of Mengistu and his Derg colleagues and

make them more amenable to Soviet manipulation. In its crudity, it is insulting to the intelligence of the Ethiopians. They did not take it seriously enough to bring it to the attention of the United States toward which they were showing some warmth at this very period in hopes of getting previously ordered military equipment and spare parts released. It is hard to believe that a seasoned and experienced officer such as Ratanov was not engaging in a charade in reporting this grotesque scheme and discussions of it with senior Ethiopian officials to Moscow.⁴

Limited as they are in what they reveal of the debates and actions of Soviet officials in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Moscow in 1977-78, these Soviet-bloc documents are worth more detailed examination and analysis, a task which I hope to undertake at greater length and also encourage others to do. More such documents may eventually become available, as well as a potentially rich collection of Ethiopian materials from this period that has been assembled in Addis Ababa for use in the trial of former Derg officials (the future status of these documents is unclear, but it is to be hoped that they will be made available to scholars). Access to these materials, as well as additional U.S. government documents still awaiting declassification and still-inaccessible Cuban and other sources, may enable a far better understanding of the Horn of Africa Crisis of 1977-78.

¹ Though Siad told me on meeting with him in Mogadishu in September 1977 that Somalia had no regular military personnel in Ethiopia, the United States never took his claims seriously. Neither, so far as we can tell, did the Soviets.

² Moscow had up to 4000 advisers in Somalia as of the beginning of 1977. There was also a sizable Cuban presence in Somalia.

³ Chapter 5, "Crisis and Degeneration", pp. 133-167 in *The Horn of Africa from War to Peace* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1991).

⁴ I served as the officer responsible for Horn affairs in the U.S. National Security Council during this period. No scheme remotely resembling "Operation Torch" was ever considered by the U.S. Government.

EAST GERMANY AND THE HORN CRISIS: DOCUMENTS ON SED AFRIKAPOLITIK

By Christian F. Ostermann

The documents from the archives of the former Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED)—the *Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der SED" im Bundesarchiv*, Berlin—included in the selection of Russian and East German materials on the Horn of Africa crisis in 1977-78 demonstrate the usefulness of multiarchival research for an understanding of *Soviet* and *Cuban* policy. Given the difficulties with access to the Soviet and Cuban archives, the formerly top-secret documents from the East German Communist party archives, among them high-level discussions between CPSU, SED and Cuban party operatives, help to understand Moscow's and Havana's interests and actions, in ways that usefully supplement and go beyond what is currently available from those countries, in this regional flare-up that became a superpower crisis.

The documents also provide new insights into the East German role in the Cold War in Africa. By the mid-1970s, Africa had become an increasingly important arena for GDR foreign policy. Prior to the "wave of recognition" following the Basic Treaty between East and West Germany in 1972, East Berlin's primary interest in Africa was to enhance its international standing and prestige. The decolonization process seemed to offer plenty of opportunities for the regime of SED first secretary Walter Ulbricht to undermine and circumvent the "Hallstein doctrine," Bonn's post-1955 policy to consider the establishment of diplomatic relation with the GDR by any third country to be an "unfriendly act" towards the Federal Republic. Grounded in the belief that the West German government was the only government truly representative of the German nation, the "Hallstein doctrine" effectively managed to deny the GDR international legitimacy outside the Soviet bloc.

East German efforts to subvert the Hallstein doctrine in Africa by gaining

diplomatic recognition were only partially successful. In the wake of the 1956 Suez crisis, East Berlin managed to get its foot in the door in Egypt, largely because of its outspoken condemnation of West German support for Israel as well as its demonstrative solidarity with the Egyptian people in the form of large long-term loans. Such overt support did not go unnoticed in Cairo. In the months after Suez, Egyptian President Gamel Abdul Nasser agreed to the establishment of an Egyptian trade mission in East Berlin. Shortly afterwards, the East German trade mission in Cairo was upgraded to a consulate-general. Under special plenipotentiary Ernst Scholz, the mission soon developed into East Berlin's African headquarters for its quest for recognition.

Despite increased East German propaganda against the "imperialist" Federal Republic in the 1960s, however, Ulbricht's efforts continued to fall short of formal recognition, largely due to West German economic pressure and the threat of the Hallstein doctrine. Most African leaders, even the ones rated "progressive," were indifferent to complexities of the German question. *Les querelles allemandes*, however, persistently plagued East Berlin's relations with African countries. Although Willy Brandt's *Neue Ostpolitik* freed the GDR's interlocutors from the fear of West German political sanctions, any rapprochement with East Berlin still bore the risk of economic reprisals.¹

Africa remained a field for competition with the Federal Republic following the diplomatic breakthrough of the early 1970s, but with recognition widely secured, other aspects of the GDR's African policy assumed greater importance. GDR political, ideological, and military support for liberation movements and countries with a socialist orientation demonstrated to Moscow and other East-bloc countries East Germany's growing importance and allowed the SED leadership to develop a more distinct international profile, enhancing both the regime's international and domestic legitimacy. Close cultural-ideological ties and economic-military cooperation with African states sup-

ported East Berlin's claim to a *Sonderrolle* (special role) within the socialist camp as Moscow's most trusted and perhaps most significant ally. At the same time, increased trade with African countries decreased the GDR's dependence on Soviet economic support and provided valuable foreign currencies and markets. Finally, the GDR's increased presence on the African continent reflected a growing East German *Sendungsbewusstsein* (missionary zeal) among many SED officials who perceived the export of Soviet-style socialism to Africa to be a crucial element in the growth and eventual success of world communism.

East German leaders seized the opportunity for increased involvement on the Horn of Africa when the end of imperial rule in Ethiopia in 1974 threw the region into turmoil. Despite the success of the New Democratic Revolution in Ethiopia in April 1976, Moscow's position in Addis Ababa remained deeply troubled. To the south, Somalia's putatively socialist leader, Mohammed Siad Barre, took advantage of Ethiopia's weakness and seized the Ogaden region from Ethiopia. Despite its interest in the strategically important Somalia harbor of Berbera, Moscow grew increasingly uncertain and wary of its close relations with Siad Barre. More significantly, Moscow's longstanding support of the Eritrean liberation movements against Addis Ababa now had to be balanced with its interest in the survival—and thus territorial integrity—of the Ethiopian Revolution, led, until early 1977, by a military junta of uncertain ideological convictions. Not until February 1977, when Lt.-Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, the First Deputy Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, seized the post of PMAC chairman, did Moscow throw its full weight behind the Ethiopian regime.

The GDR's embroilment in the crisis was to some extent the result of fortuitous circumstance. Walter Lamberz, SED politburo member and Erich Honecker's trouble shooter for Africa, happened to be in Addis Ababa on the eve of the coup which brought Mengistu to power and was immediately on hand

to reassure the new leader of the Soviet bloc's and, in particular, the GDR's, continued interest in close relations. Within weeks, a representative from the GDR Ministry for State Security was sent to Addis Ababa to negotiate military (and intelligence) support (including the sending of East German military cadres) for the Mengistu regime. As the documents show, East Berlin's high hopes for Mengistu were soon crushed by his reluctance fully to adopt the Soviet model and in particular his refusal to establish an avant-garde Marxist-Leninist party. Given its presence on the scene, and the missionary zeal and the long-standing ties of its emissaries, East Berlin was determined to change Mengistu's mind. Following several personal visits by Lamberz to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian leader agreed to receive a SED Central Committee mission which would work towards the formation of a workers' party. East Berlin's efforts in socialist nation-building, however, proved futile. Fed up with Mengistu's intransigence, his all-encompassing preoccupation with the wars with Eritrea and Somalia, and the PMAC's suspicion against any rival organization, the East German mission left in November 1978 after a nine-month stint in the Ethiopian capital.²

The East German presence in the region - and East Berlin's longstanding ties with Siad Barre in particular - also proved advantageous when Soviet relations with Somalia plummeted in the course of the Somali-Ethiopian War (1977-1978). Soviet military support of the Mengistu regime and Moscow's increasing suspicions regarding Siad Barre's collusion with the West exacerbated tensions between the two countries, and in November 1977 Siad Barre expelled Soviet and Cuban advisers and abrogated the three-year old Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR. By contrast, Somali-East German relations initially remained stable, providing Moscow with an ongoing channel of communication. As Honecker explained to Castro in April 1977, "we are pursuing the goal of keeping up the dialogue with Siad Barre and tying him to us as much as possible." Nevertheless, GDR aid to Ethiopia soon

surpassed previous commitments to Somalia.

East Germany's increased stature on the Horn was also reflected in the SED's efforts to mediate between the PMAC and the Eritrean liberation movements. Preliminary talks with Mengistu, held in late 1977, and with Siassi Aforki, general secretary of the Revolutionary People's Party of Eritrea and deputy general secretary of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), in January 1978, led to three sets of secret negotiations between the warring parties in East Berlin in January/February, March, and June 1978. Eager to avoid further Eritrean-Ethiopian confrontation that would only serve Western interests, the SED sought to engineer a peaceful and comprehensive settlement that included Eritrean autonomy and Ethiopian territorial integrity.³ The fact that the PMAC and EPLF agreed to negotiations at all—the first since the conflict had erupted 17 years earlier—was in itself a remarkable achievement. SED leaders spent much energy and personal leverage in swaying both sides to the negotiating table, at one point causing Berhanu Bayeh, a member of the PMAC Executive Committee to agree to meet Aforki “since he, as we can tell, appeals to you [the East Germans].”⁴

Getting both sides to negotiate in Berlin was one thing, substantive progress another. Despite a successful first round,⁵ SED expectations soon sobered. Mengistu remained more interested in a military solution of the Eritrean problem and proved unresponsive to East Germans calls to conceptualize a political solution that would accommodate Eritrean interests. The Eritreans, for their part, remained steadfast in their desire for full independence, unacceptable to both East Berlin and Addis Ababa. Following the second round of talks in Berlin on 23 March 1978, “the opposing points of view remained unchanged,” the East German negotiators noted.⁶

East Berlin's efforts to mediate between the warring factions raised eyebrows, at least in Havana. As the Cuban ambassador in Ethiopia, Pepe, told Lamberz, the GDR's efforts would

prove futile. Mengistu had no confidence in the talks with the Eritreans, and the “Cuban comrades have doubts as well,” Lamberz reported to Berlin.⁷

Disaster struck in March 1978. Lamberz, whose personal relationship with Mengistu had made the talks possible, died in a helicopter crash in Libya. The negotiations in March proved ever more acrimonious. With the war with Somalia subsiding, the PMAC, by June, went on the offensive in Eritrea, routing the EPLF forces. The SED was, CPSU officials informed their SED counterparts, trying to “square the circle” in Ethiopia. Once the PMAC was on the offensive, the Soviets advised, “an attempt on our part to stop the Ethiopian leadership in its military course is a very delicate problem.”⁸ With interest in a political settlement waning on all sides, the third round of talks (10 June 1978) in Berlin was doomed to fail. The SED had to acknowledge that “the meeting reflected a further hardening of the positions and mutually exclusive positions.”⁹ More clearly than the second meeting, the self-appointed SED mediators had to acknowledge, “it was evident that the PMAC has the intention to seek a military solution.” According to an internal SED report, Berhanu now considered the “liberation of Eritrea, of course through force,” as the only option.¹⁰ The East Berlin negotiations on Eritrea thus ended in failure. The “best result of the meeting[s] was that the SED comrades are starting to give up on their illusions,” one Cuban leader, somewhat gloatingly, related Berhanu's reaction to the break-down of the Berlin talks.¹¹

Subsequent mediation efforts proved similarly futile, and the issue was not resolved until 1991—when the military defeat and overthrow of the Mengistu regime allowed the Eritrean rebel forces to triumph and achieve national independence, which was subsequently ratified by popular referendum.

¹ For a good survey of the East-West German rivalry in Africa see John Winrow, *The Foreign Policy of the GDR in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 54-120. See also Jude Howell, “The End of an Era: The Rise and Fall of G.D.R. Aid,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32:2 (1994), 305-328.

² See the confidential “Memorandum of Conversation between Comrade Hermann Axen and the head of the SED Central Committee Working Group in Ethiopia, Comrade Herbert Graf, on 2 August 1978 in the CC Building,” *Stiftung “Archiv der Parteien und Massorganisationen der SED” im Bundesarchiv*, Berlin (SAPMO-BArch) DY 30 IV 2/2.035/127.

³ East German drafts of the envisioned agreement can be found in SAPMO-BArch DY30 IV 2/2.035/127. See, e.g., Klaus Willerding (Dep. Foreign Minister) to Lambert, 30 January 1978, *ibid.*

⁴ “Memorandum on the Conversation between the General Secretary of the CC of the SED, Erich Honnecker, and the Delegation of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia (PMAC), headed by Berhanu Bayeh on 31 January 1978, in the Residence of the Central Committee,” Berlin, 31 January 1978, *ibid.*

⁵ Both parties agreed to seek a peaceful solution of the conflict. “Information on the Conversations between the Representatives of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of Socialist Ethiopia and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) under participation of representatives of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) at the end of January/early February 1978 in Berlin,” Berlin, 6 February 1978, *ibid.*

⁶ Memorandum, 23 March 1978, *ibid.*

⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Comrade Lamberz and the Cuban Ambassador in Ethiopia, Comrade Pepe, on 3 March 1978 (based on notes by Comrade Gen. Maj. Jaenicke), 4 March 1978, *ibid.*

⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation between Comrade Friedel Trappen and Comrade R.A. Uljanowski on Thursday, May 11, 1978, 11:00 am to 1:30 pm in the CPSU Central Committee,” *ibid.*

⁹ Information on the Third Meeting between the representatives of the PMAC of Socialist Ethiopia and the EPLF in Presence of the delegate of the SED Central Committee on 10 June 1978 in Berlin, *ibid.*; on 10 June 1978 in Berlin, *ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Memorandum by Hermann Graf on a 16 June 1978 Conversation with Valdez Vivo, 21 June 1978, *ibid.*

RUSSIAN & EAST GERMAN DOCUMENTS ON THE HORN OF AFRICA, 1977-78

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE DOCUMENTS

APRF—Archive of the President of the Russian Federation
 CC—Central Committee
 CPSU—Communist Party of the Soviet Union
 ELF-RC—Eritrean Liberation Front (Revolutionary Command)
 EPLF—Eritrean People's Liberation Front
 EPRP—Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
 EDU—Ethiopian Democratic Union
 FTAI—French Territory of the Afars and Issas, i.e. Djibouti
 MEISON—All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement
 MFA—Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 OAU—Organization of African Unity
 PDRY—People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, i.e. South Yemen
 PMAC—Provisional Military Administrative Council (of Ethiopia); the Derg
 PRC—People's Republic of China
 SAPMO-BArchSA—*Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der SED" im Bundesarchiv*, Berlin
 SDR—Somali Democratic Republic
 SED—Socialist Unity Party of East Germany
 SRSP—Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party
 TsKhSD—Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation, Moscow
 UAR—United Arab Republic; Egypt
 UN—United Nations
 UNGA—United Nations General Assembly

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Counselor-Minister in Ethiopia S. Sinitsin with Political Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia Herbert Malin, 2 February 1977

From the diary of SECRET, Copy No. 2
 S.Y. Sinitsin 4 February 1977
 Ser. No. 41

NOTES OF CONFERENCE
 with Advisor for Political Issues

of USA Embassy in Ethiopia
 HERBERT MALIN

2 February 1977

I met today with Malin in the USA Embassy by preliminary arrangement. The following points of interest were discussed.

Concerning the situation in Ethiopia, Malin noted the tension of the situation caused by the activation of forces opposed to the Derg, especially in the northwestern region of the country which is siding with the Sudan. He directed attention to the "harsh pronouncements" of the Chairman of the PMAC, Teferi Banti, of January 29 and 30 of this year, addressed to the leaders of the Sudan and Somalia, who are pursuing an anti-Ethiopian policy, as well as to his call for a union of "all progressive and patriotic forces" for the defense of "the revolution and the fatherland," in this connection not mentioning the anti-government leftist organization "Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party" (EPRP). However, Malin feels that the EPRP will hardly agree to support the call of Teferi Banti, due to its disagreement with the policy of the Derg.

At the same time, he continued, the opposition forces are not united and their joint opposition to the existing regime has a temporary and tactical character. Even if the opposition forces should succeed in overthrowing this regime, a struggle for power will erupt between them, especially between the pro-monarchy "Ethiopian Democratic Union" and the "Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party" and other leftist groups. The PMAC, in his opinion, continues to be the only real common national power in contemporary Ethiopia, although its policy does not enjoy support among a significant portion of the population. It is further undoubted that, despite the declarations of the Sudanese and Somalis, present day Ethiopia does not harbor "aggressive designs" in relation to its neighbors, and in any event lacks the opportunity for the same in view of its complex internal problems.

Concerning circumstances in the Military Council itself, after the implementation

of its partial reorganization in the end of December [1976] with the aim of reinforcing "collective leadership" of the country, the opinion predominates in Addis Ababa that the policy of the PMAC will acquire a "more moderate" character. However, to judge by the declarations of Teferi Banti, that has not occurred.

In sum, according to Malin's opinion, circumstances in Ethiopia will continue to be complicated and tense for a long time to come.

For his part, he noted that the deterioration of existing circumstances in the country is tied in significant part to the open interference in the internal affairs of Ethiopia by the community of Arab countries and other forces, who are aligned in hostility to the policy of the PMAC and are supporting forces opposed to it. He noted further that, in the final analysis, what is at issue is not merely Ethiopia itself, but the situation in the region as a whole, the efforts of certain Arab circles to establish complete control over the Red Sea, which constitutes an important international maritime route, and the possible eruption here of a completely tense situation and even armed conflict. In this connection the opinion of Malin on the condition of American-Ethiopian relations and prospective development of circumstances in the given region was of interest.

Malin said that until now the American administration, owing to the presidential elections, had not had an opportunity to involve itself to the extent warranted in the development of its policy in this region. Since the change of regime in Ethiopia in 1974, American-Ethiopian relations have had a relatively complex and contentious character. The USA cannot ignore the periodic outbreaks of anti-American activity in the country. Thus, on 27-28 January of this year, in the course of anti-government demonstrations by young protesters in Addis Ababa, glass was broken and gas bombs were hurled at the department of the USIS [United States Information Service] building, in addition to which leaflets of the "Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party" were distributed. Similar bombs were hurled at the building of the MAAG [Ameri-

can Military Advisory Group]. In the course of a demonstration of by a group organized by the Military Council on 3 January in Addis Ababa in connection with the above-noted pronouncements of Teferi Banti, anti-American performances by an array of orators were also seen, along with anti-American placards and so forth, although official declarations, including those by Teferi Banti himself, contained no such direct anti-American missives.

At the same time, Malin continued, the Ethiopian government displays an interest in continuing to receive various forms of assistance from the USA, especially military assistance, and frequently talks about the timetable for the delivery of military supplies and so forth. Prior to the change of regime in Ethiopia, American military assistance was at an annual level of 10-12 million American dollars and was administered preferentially on an uncompensated basis (deliveries of arms, ammunition, spare parts, etc.). In recent years, owing to the new policy of the USA in the area of military cooperation with foreign governments, American military assistance to Ethiopia has been granted preferentially on commercial terms, and it includes several types of more advanced armaments, in connection with which the value of the assistance has grown. Thus, the signing of a multi-year contract in 1975 envisions the supply of armaments, spare parts and ammunition in the approximate sum of 250 million American dollars. Already in 1976 the USA supplied Ethiopia with part of those arms, including several "Phantom" fighter planes. This year a supply of several additional fighter planes is contemplated, as well as supplies for the Ethiopian navy, and radar defenses.

Malin noted further that the new Ethiopian administration is pursuing a policy of seeking methods of receiving military assistance from other sources as well, possibly on terms more advantageous to it, including from the USSR (he is aware of the visit by the Ethiopian military delegation to Moscow in December of 1976), as well as the PRC [People's Republic of China], although he doubts that the Chinese are capable of supplying Ethiopia with "serious armaments."

The USA, Malin emphasized, does not oppose the "socialist choice" of new Ethiopia and, as before, firmly supports the principal of respect for its territorial integrity,

and is against the partition of Ethiopia. The USA, it is understood, is interested in the guarantee of stability in that region and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Responding to pertinent questions, he said that the American-Ethiopian agreement of 1953 "on mutual security guarantees" concerned the preferential supply of assistance by the USA to the armed forces of Ethiopia and the guarantee of "certain American interests," first and foremost of which was the operation of the "center of communications" in Asmara, which was of great importance at the time (that center has now been curtailed in significant part); but, as he understands it, [the agreement] does not call for the direct involvement of American armed forces in the defense of Ethiopia's security, for example, in the case of aggression against it or a threat to its territorial integrity.

Concerning the present deterioration in Ethiopian-Somali relations, as far as Malin knows, the USA has not undertaken any diplomatic steps toward its normalization or restraint of anti-Ethiopian actions by the Arab countries, and in fact the Ethiopian government itself has not raised the issue with the USA.

One of the potential sources for an eruption of a conflict in that region, in Malin's opinion, is the independence of Djibouti that has emerged this year, inasmuch as a serious disagreement exists between Somalia and Ethiopia regarding the future policy of Djibouti. In recent months, the Somalis have succeeded in reinforcing their political influence in Djibouti, and their ties with its present leaders, which has seriously worried the Ethiopians. It is evident, as well, that after its declaration of independence, Djibouti will enter the League of Arab Nations, both in political and economic respects, inasmuch as the position of Djibouti will be complicated following the departure of the French. An array of Arab nations has already established consulates there. The USA also intends to do this prior to the declaration of independence, having requested appropriate permission from the government of France.

In the course of the discussion, Malin expressed interest in the state of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, having come upon rumors concerning the upcoming visit to the USSR of First Deputy Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam, and also

in connection with the negative, as he understands it, attitude of Somalia toward the prospective development of Soviet-Ethiopian cooperation.

I told Malin that our traditionally friendly relations with Ethiopia have a tendency to develop further, as evident from the joint Soviet-Ethiopian communique of 14 July 1976, resulting from the visit to Moscow of an Ethiopian state delegation; the growth of Soviet technical assistance to Ethiopia (teachers in the University, doctors, etc.); the work here during the second half of last year by Soviet economic experts, and so forth. It was pointed out that the continuation of contacts between the two countries at a high level would be the natural procedure under such conditions, although, however, that question had not come up in respect to a concrete plan. I said further that we are aware of the disagreements between Somalia and Ethiopia, and that our unwavering position in that connection is to serve as a motivation for both countries to move towards a peaceful resolution of these disagreements at the negotiating table, in order to prevent a deterioration of circumstances in this region. This relates as well to our position in connection with the current complication in Sudanese-Ethiopian relations. As concerns the future of developments in Soviet-Ethiopian cooperation, it is understood that this cannot be directed against Somalia, with whom we are also developing friendly relations, as the Somali leadership is well aware.

Malin asked, in my opinion, in what spheres would the interests of the USA in Ethiopia not be counter to the interests of the Soviet Union.

I replied, that in my view, these spheres would first and foremost encompass the conduct of a policy of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia; noninterference in its internal affairs; a realistic approach to the social-economic and political transformations taking place in the country by the will of the people; the building of peace and security and a halt to the growth of tensions and conflicts between the countries of that region; and adherence to the principle of unrestricted navigation in the Red Sea, in accordance with recognized standards of international law and the interests of peaceful relations in general.

Thanking me for the conference, Malin expressed a desire for continuation of fur-

ther contacts and exchanges of opinions regarding the questions discussed, as to which, for his part, he stated his agreement.

COUNSELOR-MINISTER TO THE
USSR EMBASSY IN ETHIOPIA
/s/ S. SINITSIN

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1638, ll. 28-33; translated by Bruce McDonald.]

**Third African Department, Soviet
Foreign Ministry, Information Report
on Somali-Ethiopian Territorial
Disputes, 2 February 1977**

SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL
DISAGREEMENTS WITH ETHIOPIA
AND THE POSITION OF THE USSR
(Brief Information Sheet)

Somalia claims a significant part of Ethiopian territory (the Ogaden region) on the basis of the fact that a large number of Somalis live there (around 1 million people).

Ethiopia totally rejects the territorial claims of the SDR, basing its position on the fact that the borders with Somalia were set by international agreements, particularly the Agreement on the demilitarization of the Ethiopia-Somalia border, which was signed in 1908 between Ethiopia and Italy. They also refer to the resolution of the OAU which was accepted in Cairo in 1964, which says that all African states must recognize the borders which existed at the moment when they were granted independence.

The tension in relations with Somalia led imperial Ethiopia to draw close to Kenya (the Somalis did not decline either from demanding the unification with Somalia of the Northern border region of Kenya, which is populated by Somalis) on an anti-Somali basis. In 1963 there was a Treaty on joint defense signed between the two countries.

At the beginning of 1964 a direct military confrontation broke out between Ethiopia and Somalia, although the conflict was soon settled through the mediation of the OAU. The Soviet government also called on both sides with an appeal to quickly cease fire and to resolve all disputed issues in a peaceful way.

During 1970-71 a series of Ethiopia-Somalia negotiations were conducted which ended without result. At the end of 1972-beginning of 1973 a series of border inci-

dents broke out (in the regions of Washen, Bongol, Dolo, and others) which were smoothed over by peaceful means.

The tension in relations between Ethiopia and Somalia many times attracted the attention of the Organization of African Unity. However, efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the territorial argument between Ethiopia and Somalia within the framework of the OAU so far have yielded no result.

At the session of the OAU Assembly which took place in Addis Ababa in January 1976, two meetings took place, at Siad Barre's initiative, between him and the chairman of the PMAC of Ethiopia, during which the question of bilateral relations was raised. The leaders of both countries asserted that the exchange of opinions was productive, and expressed the intention to continue the dialogue. Practical steps in this direction, however, were not undertaken.

The Somali leaders, though they stress that the issue must be resolved by peaceful means, as in the past do not repudiate the demand about the unification of the Ogaden with Somalia. According to available information, the Somalis continue their activity in the Ogaden, throwing their armed detachments in there under the command of line officers.

The new Ethiopian leadership, refusing to discuss the territorial issue, expresses readiness to conduct negotiations on the demilitarization of the existing border and speaks out in favor of the development of economic, cultural, and other relations with the SDR.

Relations between the two countries are becoming more complex also because of Djibouti - a French territory of Afars and Issa (FTAI), to which France intends to grant independence this year. For Ethiopia this territory represents a vital interest in view of the fact that Djibouti is the terminus of the railway from Addis Ababa, by way of which the basic part of Ethiopia's foreign trade freight is carried. The Somalis, for their part, consider the FTAI, or, as they call that territory, "French Somalia," one of five parts of "Greater Somalia," in view of the fact that its population to a significant extent consists of tribes which are related to the Somalis.

At the XXX session of the UN GA, a resolution was accepted in which was asserted the unconditional right of the people

of Djibouti to quick and unconditional independence, and also contained an appeal to all states to "desist from any claims whatever on that territory and declare null and void any actions in support of such claims." Both Ethiopia and Somalia voted for that resolution.

At the same time the government of the SDR does not hide its hopes that once having become independent the population of Djibouti will come out in favor of unification with Somalia. This was displayed, in particular, at the XIII Assembly of the OAU (July 1976), where the Somali representatives did not support the demand of Ethiopia for a joint declaration to repudiate territorial claims, asserting that the sovereignty of Djibouti should not depend on "threats of police actions from the power-guarantors." In December 1976, President Siad, in a communication to the heads of African states, declared even more precisely that "if the goal of these guarantees will force Somalia to reject our blood ties, the common history and culture which tie us with the people of Djibouti, then we declare, that is impossible."

Nonetheless, Somalia, just like Ethiopia, voted for the resolution of the XXXI session of the UN GA of 23 November 1976, on Djibouti, which once again affirmed the right of the people of that territory to independence. Representatives of both countries to the UN declared that their governments will recognize, respect, and observe the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Djibouti after it receives independence.

However, in the course of the discussion at the UN General Assembly session, the speeches of the Somalia and Ethiopia delegations showed that, as in the past, serious disagreements remain between these countries about the ways to resolve the Djibouti problem. They showed particularly on the issue of the return to the territory of political refugees. The Ethiopians accused the Somalis of intending to send to Djibouti their own citizens, disguised as refugees, so as to ensure as a consequence its joining with the SDR.

The position of the Somali leadership regarding Eritrea also leaves a negative imprint on Somalia-Ethiopia relations. Providing support to Eritrean separatists, Somalia, to all appearances, is counting on the fact that the separation of Eritrea from Ethio-

pia will lead to a split of the multinational Ethiopian state, which will facilitate the unification of the Ogaden territory with Somalia.

The Somali government recently has activated its propaganda against Ethiopia and its activity in the international arena, with the goal of enlisting support for its position vis-a-vis the new Ethiopian regime, which, as it believes, is conducting in relation to Somalis the former imperial "colonial policy." This point of view was expressed by the vice president of the SDR [Gen. Mohamed Ali] Samantar during his visit last year to a number of European socialist countries and to Cuba. However, in no instance did it meet with understanding. Somalia is also taking certain steps in Arab countries so as to receive support for its claims to Ogaden and Djibouti. In this regard the Somalis point to the fact that the joining of Djibouti to the "Arab world" (SDR is a member of the Arab League) promises it not insignificant benefits in realizing plans to turn the Red Sea into an "Arab lake."

Arab reaction supports and heats up the aspirations of the Somalis, with the goal of putting pressure on the progressive Ethiopian leadership. President of Somalia Siad intends in the beginning of 1977 to complete a trip to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and several other Arab countries. As he left in January 1977 for Khartoum to prepare for this visit, Member of the Politburo of the CC of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party [Ahmed] Suleiman [Abdullah] public expressed himself in vulgar anti-Ethiopian thrusts. Suleiman openly spoke out in support of the Eritrean separatists, and also in favor of a proposal to move the headquarters of the OAU from Addis Ababa to another capital, a proposal for which Sudan and several African countries with a pro-Western orientation recently expressed support.

Beginning in the 1960s, in almost every instance of a serious aggravation of Ethiopia-Somalia relations, Ethiopia and Somalia have appealed to the Soviet government with a request to assert influence on the government of the other country with the goal of normalizing the situation. Recently, both Somalia and Ethiopia have repeatedly called for more active participation by the Soviet Union in settling their bilat-

eral relations. In this regard each of them is counting on the Soviet Union to support precisely their position, using for this its authority and friendly relations with the opposing side.

In January 1976, Siad Barre informed the Soviet government of [Somalia's] intention to enter into negotiations with the Ethiopian leadership about the creation of a Federation of Somalia and Ethiopia. In this regard the President requested the Soviet side to join the negotiations as a mediator. Insofar as the goal and character of a federation, as well as the possible position of Ethiopia, were not clear, it was decided to avoid defining our attitude to this initiative and mediation on this issue. In November 1976 Siad Barre expressed the wish that the Soviet side would report to the Ethiopian leadership about the wish of the SDR to begin a peaceful dialogue with Ethiopia on the disputed issues which they have. This wish was brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Committee of the PMAC for political and foreign affairs through the Soviet Embassy in Addis Ababa.

At the end of 1976 the Cubans and South Yemenis came out with an initiative to provide mediatory services towards a settlement of Somalia-Ethiopia relations. The Somali government, not rejecting this proposal, spoke out in favor of the Soviet Union as well participating directly in the mediation. The Ethiopian side, regarding the mediation initiative favorably, did not express an analogous wish. Cuba and the PDRY through diplomatic channels are taking certain steps to organize meetings between the leaders of Somalia and Ethiopia.

The position of the Soviet Union on the question of the Ethiopia-Somalia territorial dispute, which many times has been brought to the attention of the governments of both countries, is that Ethiopia and the SDR must take all possible measures to settle their disagreements by means of negotiations and to find a way to lessen the tension in Ethiopia-Somalia relations.

The friendly advice of the USSR government, aimed at a settlement of Ethiopia-Somalia relations, has been favorably accepted by the governments of both countries. In responses to our appeals both Ethiopia and Somalia have announced their readiness to resolve all disputed issues by means of negotiations and not to allow the unleashing of a new armed conflict.

Third African Department
MFA USSR

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1632, ll. 39-44; translated by Mark H. Doctoroff; note revisions to this document added in late May-early June, printed below.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador in Ethiopia
A.P. Ratanov and Cuban Ambassador
in Ethiopia Jose Peres Novoa,
10 February 1977**

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2
From the diary of "30" March 1977
RATANOV, A.P. Issue No. 129

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
With the Ambassador of Cuba in Ethiopia
JOSE PERES NOVOA
10 February 1977

During a conversation which took place in the Soviet Embassy, Jose Peres Novoa reported that on 8 February he had visited Mengistu Haile Mariam at the latter's request.

Mengistu requested that the Ambassador pass on to Fidel Castro a verbal message in which the PMAC requests Cuba to provide assistance to the Ethiopian People's Militia via deliveries of small arms. In this regard Mengistu declared that the Americans had already refused to provide spare parts for tanks, [and] had suspended deliveries of spare parts for all kinds of weapons, and that the PMAC expects the USA, after the events of 3 February to apply even harsher sanctions against Ethiopia. At the same time the USA is providing military assistance to Sudan, [and] Kenya, and is encouraging officials of these and other countries to act against the Ethiopian regime.

The PMAC, reported Mengistu, intends to follow Cuba's example of creating in factories and agencies, and in villages, committees for defense of the revolution, which will act in close contact with detachments of the people's militia, which are formed under the supervision of urban and rural associations. However, the effectiveness of these measures will depend on whether the PMAC has available and at its disposal the necessary quantity of weapons.

USSR AMBASSADOR IN ETHIOPIA
/s/ A. RATANOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, l. 85; translated by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

**Soviet Embassy in East Germany,
Report for CPSU CC Summarizing
Visit to Somalia on 31 January-1
February 1977 by Delegation of the
GDR Socialist Unity Party (SED) CC,
18 February 1977**

USSR EMBASSY IN
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
SECRET, Copy no. 1
18 February 1977

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
CC CPSU comrade B. N. PONOMAREV

We send to your attention according to classified procedures this report concerning the trip to Somalia, Mozambique, and Ethiopia (January 31 - February 11 of this year) by a delegation from the German Democratic Republic, headed by Politburo member, Secretary of the CC SED, comrade W. Lamberz.

ATTACHMENT: above-mentioned document of 41 pages, secret.

USSR AMBASSADOR TO
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

/s/ P. ABRASIMOV

[attachment]

SECRET, Copy no. 1
Attachment to no. 122
18 February 1977
Translated from German

REPORT

concerning a trip to the Democratic Republic of Somali by a delegation from the CC SED from
31 January-1 February 1977

From 31 January to 1 February a delegation from the CC SED, headed by Politburo member, Secretary of the CC, Werner Lamberz visited Mogadishu at the invitation of the leadership of the Somali Revolu-

tionary Socialist Party (SRSP). The delegation comprised: CC Member Kurt Tidke, Candidate-Member of the CC Eberhard Heidrich, Deputy Chief of the CC Section Freidel Trappen.

In accordance with its instructions, the delegation conveyed from the Secretary General of the CC SED Erich Honecker to the Secretary General of the SRSP and to the President of the Democratic Republic of Somalia, Mohammed Siad Barre, a message in response to the letter from Barre dated 24 November 1976, and concluded an agreement on collaboration between the SED and the SRSP for 1977-78.

The delegation received Mohammed Siad Barre, with whom they engaged in a detailed discussion.

Werner Lamberz conveyed greetings from the Secretary General of the CC SED and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Eric Honecker, and conveyed some explanations regarding his message. At the same time he stated the SED position with regard to the progressive development in Somalia and reported on the decisions of our party leadership, which were made as a result of the discussions of comrade [GDR Vice President Willi] Stoph in Somalia with comrade Samantar in the GDR. It was declared that the SED will now and in the future, to the extent of its abilities, offer support to the Republic of Somalia. At the same time, particular attention was drawn to the concurrence of the party.

Mohammed Siad Barre expressed his thanks for the message from Eric Honecker and expressed his gratitude for the GDR's manifestation of solidarity with the anti-imperialist liberation struggle. Somalia considers the help, which has been offered by the SSNM brigade in the preparation of specialists, to be particularly useful. Siad Barre in detail elucidated the internal situation in Somalia and, at the same time, particularly underscored the difficulties in realizing the party program.

In connection with the statement by Werner Lamberz concerning relations between the SDR and Ethiopia, Barre first and foremost affirmed the necessity of reaching a peaceful settlement of the problem with Ethiopia. However, at the same time, it was notable that his position on this question was contradictory and not free of nationalist features. He expressed doubt about the revolutionary nature of development in Ethio-

pia and characterized the Ethiopian leaders as chauvinists, and as connected to Zionist forces. Progressive forces in Ethiopia, including Marxist-Leninists, are persecuted and destroyed.

In the course of further conversation, in particular after the statement setting forth our position regarding the necessity of reaching agreement between progressive forces in Somalia and Ethiopia, and of the inadmissibility of any possibility that the imperialists should profit from the discord between the two states, Barre declared that he was prepared to study seriously any proposition of the Ethiopian leadership, in particular, from Mengistu. (Attachment 1). [not printed—ed.] (During the meeting between members of the Somali party and state leadership and the delegation, at which ambassadors of the socialist countries were also present, the Soviet ambassador to Mogadishu informed me that at the end of January [1977] comrade Brezhnev had likewise sent a message to Siad Barre, containing an urgent request that Barre reconsider the Somali position with regard to Ethiopia and that they avoid any exacerbation of the conflict.)

During the discussion of the project for a party agreement proposed by the SED, at first clarity was achieved with regard to the notion that the central content of such an agreement should be cooperation in the political-ideological area and that cooperation between our parties comprises the nucleus of all relations between our states and peoples. However, the SRSP delegation, headed by Politburo Member Ahmed Suleiman Abdullah, came forward with a request which greatly exceeds the ability of the SED (to build five fully equipped regional Party schools, to equip 82 regional Party committees with radio technology and supply with typographical machines, to accept an exceedingly large number of students for study at SED institutes of higher education, etc.), with which it was not possible to agree. In spite of these unrealistic requests, we succeeded in concluding an agreement which is realistic and which represents significant assistance and support for the Somali Party (Attachment II). [not printed—ed.]

It was strikingly apparent that, both during the time when our delegation toured around the city and during the negotiations on a Party agreement, mention was made

repeatedly of the assistance and support which Somalia receives from China.

According to various [sources of] information, apart from a strongly progressive core in the Somali leadership, there is also a pro-China force which leans to the side of reactionary Arab states. (Last year Somalia was accepted into the Arab League as its youngest member.)

/s/ comr. R. A. Ulianovskii

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 77, d. 1618, ll. 1-5.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador to Somalia G.V.
Samsonov and Somali President Siad
Barre, 23 February 1977**

EMBASSY OF THE USSR IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
SOMALIA

From the journal of Secret. Copy No. 2
G.V. SAMSONOV Orig. No. 101
11 March 1977

NOTES FROM CONVERSATION
with President of the Democratic Republic
of Somalia
MOHAMMED SIAD BARRE

23 February 1977

Today I was received by President Siad.

In accordance with my orders I informed him about the considerations of the Soviet leaders, and Comrade Brezhnev personally, concerning the situation developing around Ethiopia.

The President thanked me for the information. Then he pointed out that certain people in the SDR, encouraged from abroad, speculated that Soviet cooperation with Ethiopia was allegedly carried out to the detriment of Soviet-Somali relations. According to Siad, he had to condemn such a point of view in his speech at the Khalan Military School in particular, he had to say that such statements should be considered anti-Somali propaganda aimed at subversion of the Somali revolution. The President emphasized that the assistance that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries provide for the Ethiopian revolution was not only justified, but also necessary. The So-

viet Union, as we understand it, the President said, is trying to help Ethiopia stabilize on the road of socialist orientation, and those goals of the Soviet Union completely coincide with Somali interests. The SDR has an interest in having a socialist, not a capitalist, neighbor.

Characterizing Chairman of the PMAC H.M. Mengistu, President Siad called him a firm and consistent proponent of the progressive change in Ethiopia. However, according to Siad, Mengistu does not abide by Leninist principles in the nationality issue. He must give the nations living in Ogaden, including both the Eritreans and the Somalis, the right to self-determination. According to the President, it is important that Mengistu resolves the territorial problem right now, or at least gives assurances that he is ready to consider this question positively in the future. Siad alleged that the struggle for power in the Ethiopian leadership was still going on, and that there were no positive changes in the state apparatus of that country. The President thinks that Mengistu is unwilling to meet with him. He mentioned the fact that the Chairman of the PMAC did not give an immediate response to the [Tanzania President Julius] Nyerere letter, which was delivered to Addis Ababa by Vice President [Aboud] Jumbe of Tanzania, and in which, according to Siad, the idea of his meeting with Mengistu was put forth.

Responding to the Soviet remarks concerning statements of certain Somali statesmen in Sudan, President Siad alleged that member of the Politburo CC SRSP Suleiman had only expressed an opinion on the situation in Ethiopia, and that Minister of Public Health Rabile God was just giving his personal views, and that his statement was, allegedly, provoked by the Sudanese. The main threat to Ethiopia was arising from Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya, not from the SDR, emphasized the President. According to a reliable source, Siad said, the internal reaction, represented by the Ethiopian Democratic Union headquartered in London and supported by the CIA, was carefully preparing a broad terrorist campaign against the leadership of the PMAC and against other progressive Ethiopian leaders. Siad denied the information that special units trained in the Somali territory, which also included Somali servicemen, were being transferred to the Ogaden. The

SDR was not going to start a war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden, stressed the President. Such a conflict would be detrimental to both countries. Only imperialists and the Arab reactionaries would win in such a case. We understand this very well, said Siad. However, we will support the struggle for unification with the Fatherland of the Somalis living in the Ogaden, emphasized the President. He said that the people living in the Ogaden were their brothers and sisters, and that his leadership could not reject them if they appeal to them for help. The people of Somalia would not understand its leaders if they were to suppress their struggle for liberation from the Ethiopian colonial yoke.

I explained to Siad the CPSU policy on the nationality issue.

Responding to my question concerning Somali-American contacts, the President told me about his meeting with USA representative at the UN [Andrew] Young in Zanzibar in early February 1977. He mentioned that the meeting was held at the American initiative. According to Siad, Young informed him about the "new approach" of the Carter Administration in their policy toward Africa, and stressed the USA readiness to cooperate with all African countries. Siad Barre said to Young that the peoples of Africa will judge the "new" American policy by the practical actions of the American administration. First of all, the United States must withdraw its support for the white minority regimes in South Africa. Responding to Young's question, why the SDR was always acting from an anti-American position, Siad said that it was the United States that was always conducting a vicious anti-Somali policy. The SDR decisively condemned the USA position on the Middle East, and also the support that the USA gave to various reactionary forces in their struggle against progressive regimes, and the fomenting of military conflicts in various regions of the globe.

The President told me that recently a representative of the USA State Department visited Mogadishu, arriving from Khartoum. He had a meeting with General Director Abdurrahman Jama Barre of the MFA of the SDR. The American requested to have meetings with several Somali state leaders of his choice, including First Vice President Samantar. His request was denied. According to the President, the American left the SDR dissatisfied.

Touching upon his initiative for cooperation between the USSR and the SDR, the President repeated the suggestion he made earlier (17 January 1977) that the Soviet Union take on the development of the lands of the Fanole project. According to the President, Somalia had neither the necessary experts, nor technology, nor resources, and that it would be incorrect to invite other countries to carry out those tasks. Siad said that the provision about development of those lands had not been included in the original agreement on Fanole project construction only because of the incompetence of the Somali representatives who signed that document.

The President also reminded me of his request concerning construction of a naval base in the region of Mogadishu, and also of docks in Berbera and Kismayu, which was stated in the memorandum delivered to Moscow by First Vice President Samantar. Those projects are still in force and the Somali leadership is expecting the Soviet government to examine them favorably.

Speaking about the military airfield in Berbera which had been opened recently, Siad said that it had been built without taking into account the prospects of its possible civilian utilization. This airfield should serve not only the interests of the USSR, but the interests of the SDR also. In order for this airfield to be used by civil aviation in the future, it would be necessary additionally to build a control tower for air traffic controllers, a room for transit passengers, other necessary services of a modern airport, and also a hotel for 200-300 rooms in the city, in which the Soviet air crews and naval crews could also stay. Those additional constructions would serve as a kind of cover for the military airfield.

Having given a high evaluation of the Soviet assistance in the organization of fishing cooperatives, President Siad made a request that the Soviet side provide resources in the form of commodity credits to cover the local expenses in those cooperatives, since the SDR was experiencing shortages not only of material, but also of financial resources for those projects. Specifically, the Somali leadership was asking the Soviet Union to take responsibility for providing the minimum living standard for the families of transfer workers in the cooperatives, and to apportion up to 10 shillings per worker per day, mentioned the President.

According to the President, he gave directives to certain Somali organizations to prepare official requests on the questions just mentioned.

President Siad expressed his warm gratitude to the CC CPSU for the decision to provide assistance in construction of the party school at the Central Committee of the SRSP. He said he considered that assistance a show of fraternal care from the CPSU for the SRSP which was undergoing a difficult formative period. He also thanked Moscow for the attention to the request for more Somali citizens, especially for people from Djibouti, to be given an opportunity to study in the Soviet Union, and for the decision to satisfy the request in the 1977-78 academic year.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
IN THE SDR /G. SAMSONOV/

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1621, ll. 10-14; translation by S. Savranskaya.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Acting Charge d'affaires in
Ethiopia S. Sinitsin and Ethiopian
official Maj. Berhanu Bayeh,
18 March 1977**

TOP SECRET Copy No. 2
From the journal of 30 March 1977
SINIT SIN, S.Ia. Issue No. 124

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with the member of the Permanent
Committee of the PMAC
Major BERHANU BAYEH
18 March 1977

This evening I visited Berhanu Bayeh in the office of the PMAC at his request.

Referring to an instruction of the leadership of the PMAC, he informed me for transmission to Moscow of the following.

1. The meeting in Aden which took place March 16 between Mengistu Haile Mariam and Siad Barre, with the participation of [Cuban President] Fidel Castro and [People's Democratic Republic of Yemen President] Rubayi [Ali], ended without result in view of the position which Siad Barre took at the meeting.

As Berhanu Bayeh said, the President of the SDR in arrogant terms expressed Somalia's territorial claims against Ethio-

pia, called Ethiopia a "colonial power," and declared that Somalia will continue its current policy in relation to Ethiopia, "while all Somalians have not received freedom." Siad Barre displayed disrespect to Mengistu Haile Mariam, crudely saying that that he allegedly is carrying out the same policy as had Haile Selassie. The Somali leader also declared that if Ethiopia considers itself a socialist state, then it must rapidly transfer the Ogaden to the SDR. As the basis of a settlement of the Ethiopian-Somali disagreement, Siad Barre suggested the creation of a confederation of the two countries on an "ethnic basis," i.e., with the preliminary transfer by Ethiopia of the Ogaden to Somalia's benefit. This proposal was rejected not only by Mengistu Haile Mariam, but Fidel Castro and Rubayi also expressed themselves against such an approach, which served as grounds for disrespectful statements to them by Siad Barre.

In the words of Berhanu Bayeh, in the course of the meeting Siad Barre declared that if the socialist countries want to split with Somalia, that is their affair: the Somali people carried out its revolution without outside help and "if the socialist countries will not help the Somalis, then reactionary countries can help them."

At the meeting Mengistu Haile Mariam stressed the necessity of a consolidation of progressive forces in this region so as to oppose jointly the maneuvers of reaction and imperialism. In this regard, he underlined that no genuine revolution can successfully develop without the support of other progressive, especially socialist, states.

Despite such results of the meeting, Berhanu Bayeh said, the Ethiopian leadership believes that the meeting brought an indisputable diplomatic success to Ethiopia, insofar as it visibly and in the presence of the leaders of Cuba and the PDRY revealed the true position of Somalia not only towards Ethiopia, but also in regard to the general tasks of the struggle with imperialism and reaction. In the opinion of Berhanu Bayeh, which, he said, is expressed also by the Cuban comrades, Siad Barre had taken such an uncompromising position at the meeting with Mengistu Haile Mariam, that he apparently had previously secured promises of support from reactionary Arab states.

2. In the evaluation of the leadership of the PMAC, Berhanu Bayeh continued, in light of the results of the Aden meeting it

is possible to assume a sharp activation of anti-Ethiopia activity by Somalia in close cooperation with reactionary Arab states. According to information which the PMAC received from Mogadishu, the President of Sudan [Ja'afar Mohammed al-]Nimeiry should arrive in Somalia in a few days. In this regard the PMAC pointed to a report in the Egyptian newspaper "Al Ahram" to the effect that in current conditions the possibility is created that Somalia will join the political command of Sudan, Egypt, and Syria. It is also well known, said Berhanu Bayeh, that Saudi Arabia is continuing to seek an end to Somalia's cooperation with the Soviet Union, including in the military area, promising in exchange to provide Somalia with the necessary assistance.

The leadership of the PMAC also is on guard about the intensified infiltration in the Ogaden by Somali armed groups, which moreover now include regular Somali troops disguised in civilian dress, armed with modern weapons. This, observed Berhanu Bayeh, has determined the extremely stubborn nature of recent armed conflict in the regions of Harar and Jijiga, as a result of which the Somalis managed to put out of action several armored vehicles of the Ethiopian Army. On 17 March, a Somali Air Force MiG fighter plane completed a provocative flight over Ethiopian territory in the region of Jijiga.

In light of all this, Berhanu Bayeh requested that a PMAC request be sent to the Soviet government to take all possible measures to restrain Somalia from anti-Ethiopia actions. The PMAC does not exclude the possibility that Somalia at the present time may be preparing a serious armed provocation against Ethiopia, and therefore would be grateful for any information about that which it could receive from the Soviet side.

From my own side I pointed out to Berhanu Bayeh the need in this situation for Ethiopia to display fortitude. Further, I underlined the principled line of the Soviet Union of all-round support for the Ethiopian revolution and our diplomatic steps in this regard which were taken recently in states which border on Ethiopia.

Berhanu Bayeh said that Ethiopia does not intend to aggravate its relations with Somalia or to toughen its own position. With satisfaction he noted the support of the Soviet Union for the Ethiopian revolution,

particularly underlining the significance of the early deliveries of Soviet arms.

In the words of Berhanu Bayeh, at the present time the PMAC is confronted with the critical issue of the uninterrupted supply to the Ethiopian Army of ammunition and spare parts for weapons which it possesses. The Americans are procrastinating on previously-agreed deliveries, and also deliveries of weapons on a commercial basis, referring in this regard to a required review of certain contracts in view of an increase in prices for these or some other types of weapons. The leadership of the PMAC, as in the past, is counting on the Soviet Union to provide Ethiopia with the necessary varied military assistance, but it understands that time will be required to master Soviet military equipment. Therefore, the PMAC is now urgently seeking out the possibility of receiving weapons, ammunition, and spare parts of American manufacture, insofar as the Ethiopian Army for now is armed by the USA.

To this end, said Berhanu Bayeh, the PMAC in the coming days will send its own delegation to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which has at its disposal significant reserves of American trophy weapons. In this regard Berhanu Bayeh in the name of the PMAC leadership expressed a wish that the Soviet side will convince the Vietnamese comrades to provide, according to their capabilities, the necessary assistance in American arms, either on a grant basis or on a combined grant and commercial basis. In this regard he noted that in contrast to the past the PMAC intends to consider this issue with the Vietnamese directly, rather than running to the PRC for mediation. For my part, I promised to send through channels the wishes and requests which had been expressed by Berhanu Bayeh.

At the end of the conversation Berhanu Bayeh made a personal request that his brother Abraham Bayeh (19 years old) be accepted into one of the educational institutions of the Soviet Union. Counter-revolutionaries, including among the student population, threaten his brother with reprisal for familial relations with the "fascist junta," because of which Abraham cannot go to school and must hide at another brother's house (Fisseha Bayeh, jurist). In these circumstances it would be desirable if Abraham Bayeh could be sent to the USSR as soon as

possible. The level of his education — 12th (graduating) grade of high school[;] however, because he currently is not able to attend classes (he studies at home with a teacher) and take the examinations, he evidently will not manage to receive an official certificate for finishing high school (he studies in the Wingate school, where until recently instruction was led by teachers from England).

I told Berhanu Bayeh that I would bring his wish and thoughts regarding his brother to the attention of the Soviet ambassador. On a personal plane, I noted that resolving that issue would require consultation with the appropriate Soviet agencies.

MINISTER-COUNSELOR OF THE
USSR EMBASSY IN ETHIOPIA
/S. SINITSYN/

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1638, ll. 93-97; translated by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

**Report from CPSU CC to SED CC,
Results of N.V. Podgorny's Visit to
Africa, late March 1977 (excerpts)**

Strictly confidential

On the results of an official visit of N.V. PODGORNYY to Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and also of an unofficial visit to Somalia and a meeting with the leaders of the national-liberation organizations of the South of Africa that took place in Lusaka on 28 March [1977]

[Received on 19 April 1977]

During the negotiations between N.V. Podgorny and the leaders of the mentioned countries they discussed issues of bilateral relations and relevant international issues. The main results of the visit were covered in published communiques, as well as in joint declarations. In addition, we would like to inform You in a confidential manner about the following....

During the talks they discussed the issues of the situation in the African Horn with regard to the aggravation of Ethiopian-Somali relations. The presidents, particularly Nyerere and [Mozambican President Samora] Machel, voiced their concern at the growing enmity between the two progressive countries and expressed regrets regard-

ing the unfriendly position of the Somali leadership towards the “revolutionary regime” in Ethiopia. In the opinion of Nyerere, for the foreseeable future one cannot expect the establishment of a friendly relationship between Somalia and Ethiopia. The maximum one can achieve is to avoid an open clash between Ethiopia and Somalia, by persuading both sides of the need to maintain mutual restraint. Nyerere and Machel said that satisfaction of the territorial demands of Somalia would automatically result in the collapse of the progressive regime in Ethiopia. All three leaders evaluated very highly the position of the Soviet Union and agreed with our opinion that progressive states must more actively come out in support of the Ethiopian revolution and advocate the normalization of Ethiopian-Somali relations....

The main topic of conversation [of Podgorny] with Siad Barre was the issue of the relationship between Somalia and Ethiopia, and also the situation emerging in this region of Africa in connection with activities of reactionary Arab forces. Exchange of opinions revealed that the Somali leadership adheres to its old positions regarding its territorial demands on Ethiopia. Siad Barre justified this stand [by referring] to the pressure of internal nationalistic circles of Somalia.

At the same time Siad Barre did not deny that there were progressive developments in Ethiopia. He distanced himself from reactionary leaders of Arab countries: Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, who sought to liquidate the progressive regime in Ethiopia. Siad called the President of the UAR [Anwar] Sadat a convinced adherent of capitalism, a reactionary, anti-Soviet schemer. In the opinion of Siad, Nimeiry is a man without principles who fell under the influence of Sadat [and] the leadership of Saudi Arabia, as well as the Americans and the British.

Siad declared that Somalia, now as before, seeks to expand cooperation with the USSR. He said that he deems it advisable to hold a meeting with Mengistu with the mediation of the USSR and underscored that only the Soviet Union which possesses great authority and experience could help Somalia and Ethiopia to work out “a formula of honor” that would allow both countries to find a road to reconciliation without losing face....

[Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202 584; obtained

and translated from Russian by V. Zubok.]

**Transcript of Meeting between East
German leader Erich Honecker and
Cuban leader Fidel Castro, East Berlin,
3 April 1977 (excerpts)**

Minutes of the conversation between Comrade Erich Honecker and Comrade Fidel Castro, Sunday, 3 April 1977 between 11:00 and 13:30 and 15:45 and 18:00, House of the Central Committee, Berlin.

Participants: Comrades Hermann Axen, Werner Lamberz, Paul Verner, Paul Markowski (with Comrades Edgar Fries and Karlheinz Mobus as interpreters), Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Osmany Cienfuegos, Raul Valdez Vivo, Jose Abrantes

Comrade Erich Honecker warmly welcomed Comrade Fidel Castro and the Cuban Comrades accompanying him to this internal conversation on behalf of the Central Committee.

We are very pleased about your visit to the GDR and the opportunity to exchange views about the result of your visit to several African and Arabian countries. On behalf of the Politburo I want to repeat that we consider your visit to these countries as important. I ask Comrade Fidel Castro to take the floor.

[first 16 pages omitted--ed.]

Statements by Comrade Fidel Castro:
[...] Before my departure from Aden we discussed with the PDRY leadership the need to do everything possible to arrive at an understanding between Somalia and Ethiopia. I was well received in Somalia. I had asked them not to have any public demonstrations. Siad Barre was very friendly during our first dinner. Prior to my arrival, I had received his reply to a letter of mine regarding the question of relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. I had also sent an envoy to Somalia for discussions with Vice President Samantar and Interior Minister Suleiman. Samantar held to leftist positions, while Suleiman was a representative of the right wing. The discussion of our representative with him was very severe. I had already received considerable information in the PDRY regarding the situation in Somalia. The power and influence of the rightist group continue to increase. The Interior Minister, Suleiman, is doing everything possible to bring Somalia closer to Saudi Arabia

and the imperialist countries. Samantar is losing influence. Everything seems to indicate that he is being driven into a corner by the right.

My first evening I wanted to clarify my thoughts about Siad Barre and the Somali revolution. No serious political discussion took place at this dinner; [Siad] Barre explained to me the evolution of the Somali revolution. The next day, we had an extensive sight-seeing program. We went to a Cuban-built militia training center, an agricultural school, a school for nomad children, etc. We were taken around for hours, although we had not yet had a political discussion, and a mass demonstration had been scheduled at noon in the stadium. I understood that they wanted to avoid such a conversation prior to the demonstration. As the demonstration began, Siad Barre and I had still not had a private conversation, and because of this I was very careful. Siad Barre was very arrogant and severe; maybe he wanted to intimidate us.

In my speech to the mass meeting I talked about imperialist policy in the Middle East, the reactionary role of Saudi Arabia, and the actions of other reactionary powers. I did this even though I knew that there was a considerable trend in the country in favor of closer relations with these countries. I talked about the PLO's struggle, the Ethiopian revolution, and the Libyan revolution, and of progressive Algeria that they want to isolate. I talked about Mozambique, and only at the end about how imperialism is doing everything to reverse the progressive order in Somalia. Siad Barre introduced me to participants of the mass meeting without saying a political word.

Before the mass meeting they had played half of a soccer game. It is unknown whether the soccer game was simply an appendage to the demonstration or vice versa. My speech went against the right wing tendencies and supported the left wing. We observed that almost all of the Central Committee members applauded, with the exception of Suleiman and his people. Samantar was very satisfied, and even Siad Barre seemed content. Nevertheless, the mass meeting was not broadcast live on radio or TV.

Only that evening did we begin to discuss specific problems, at my residence. It was clear to me that we had to be careful because surely the interior minister had in-

stalled bugs. This same evening Siad Barre finally talked about Ethiopia. He compared it to the Tsarist Empire and said that Ethiopia was the only surviving colonial power. Thanks to Lenin's wisdom, the Tsarist Empire had disappeared, but it lived on in Ethiopia. He had proposed to the Ethiopians, some time ago, to establish a federation or even a unification of the two countries. Ethiopia had not reacted then, but was now itself proposing this solution. He spoke very enthusiastically about his efforts to reach a solution with Ethiopia. I used the occasion to tell Siad Barre that I would travel to Ethiopia the next day and asked him if he would be willing to meet with Mengistu. He agreed.

The next day I flew on to Ethiopia. We had earlier agreed that there would be no great reception for me, since at the time they were still fighting the civil war. Shots constantly rang out. Mengistu took me to the old Imperial Palace and the negotiations began on the spot. I found the information that I already had to be confirmed. We continued our negotiations on the following day. Naturally we had to take extensive security precautions. The Ethiopians had come up with a division, and I had brought a company of Cuban soldiers with me. The day of my arrival there were rumors of a coup. It did not happen.

I developed the impression that there was a real revolution taking place in Ethiopia. In this former feudal empire, lands were being distributed to the peasants. Each farmer got 10 hectares. There were also reforms in the cities. It was established that each citizen could only own one house. Plots were made available for housing construction.

There is also a strong mass movement. In the capital, 500,000 people can be rapidly mobilized. In February, our study delegation, after inspecting the army divisions, had determined that of the hundreds of generals, all but two should be chased out. The officers and NCOs have taken over the leadership of the country. Currently, the leadership is considering creating a Party. There is a harsh class struggle against the feudalists in the country. The petit bourgeois powers are mobilizing against the Revolution. A strong separatist movement exists in Eritrea. Threats are coming from the Sudan, while Somalia claims 50% of Ethiopia's territory. There have been border clashes in this area

for 500 years.

Mengistu strikes me as a quiet, serious, and sincere leader who is aware of the power of the masses. He is an intellectual personality who showed his wisdom on 3 February. The rightists wanted to do away with the leftists on 3 February. The prelude to this was an exuberant speech by the Ethiopian president in favor of nationalism. Mengistu preempted this coup. He called the meeting of the Revolutionary Council one hour early and had the rightist leaders arrested and shot. A very consequential decision was taken on 3 February in Ethiopia. The political landscape of the country changed, which has enabled them to take steps that were impossible before then. Before it was only possible to support the leftist forces indirectly, now we can do so without any constraints.

I asked Mengistu whether he was willing to meet with Siad Barre in Aden. We agreed. After concluding my talks I flew on to Aden.

Siad Barre had arrived in Aden that morning. Mengistu did not arrive until the afternoon. I had a conversation with Siad Barre in which he bared his claws. He told me that if Mengistu was a real revolutionary he should do as Lenin, and withdraw from his territory. Siad Barre took a very hard position. I asked him whether he felt that there had been no real revolution in Ethiopia and that Mengistu was not a real leftist leader. He told me that there had been no revolution in Ethiopia. While in Mogadishu he had shown me a map of Greater Somalia in which half of Ethiopia had been annexed.

After my talk with Siad Barre, I told Mengistu about Barre's attitude, and asked him to remain calm. I already felt bad about having invited Mengistu to Aden while there was still a powder keg situation back in his country and that in such a tense situation he was to hear out the Somalis' territorial demands.

With regards to my question about the situation of the Ethiopian army, Mengistu said that there were still difficulties but that he didn't think that there was an acute danger of a coup.

When the meeting started, Siad Barre immediately began speaking. Siad Barre is a general who was educated under colonialism. The revolution in Somalia is led by generals who all became powerful under colo-

onial times. I have made up my mind about Siad Barre, he is above all a chauvinist. Chauvinism is the most important factor in him. Socialism is just an outer shell that is supposed to make him more attractive. He has received weapons from the socialist countries and his socialist doctrine is [only] for the masses. The Party is there only to support his personal power.

In his case there is a bizarre symbiosis of rule by military men who went through the school of colonialism and social appearances. Something about socialism appeals to him, but overall there is still a lot of inequality and unfairness in the country. His principal ideas are nationalism and chauvinism, not socialism.

His goal is old fashioned politics: sweet, friendly words. Siad Barre speaks like a wise man; only he speaks. He is different from the many political leaders that I know. [Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat, [Algerian President Houari] Boumedienne, [Mozambique President Samora] Machel, [Angolan President Agostinho] Neto and many others are strong characters. They can also listen and do not take a dogmatic attitude. One can speak with them. Siad Barre really thinks that he is at the summit of wisdom. Until now everything has gone smoothly for him. The Italians and the British made him a general. The revolution was accomplished in a minute, with hardly a shot fired. He put on a socialist face and got economic aid and weapons from the Soviet Union. His country is important strategically, and he likes prestige. Barre is very convinced of himself. His socialist rhetoric is unbearable. He is the greatest socialist; he cannot say ten words without mentioning socialism.

With this tone he began to speak in the meeting with Mengistu. He began giving a lecture on Ethiopia and demanded from Mengistu to do as Lenin had done: do away with the Ethiopian Empire. Mengistu remained quiet; he said that Ethiopia was ready and willing to find a solution and that there needed to be the first concrete steps on both sides to achieve a rapprochement.

Siad Barre theatrically responded that he was disappointed with Mengistu and that he displayed the same attitude as the Ethiopian Emperor. The Ethiopian revolutionary leadership had the same mentality as Haile Selassie. The meeting had begun at 11 PM and a solution was not in sight.

[Cuban Vice President] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez then proposed the establishment of a standing commission with representatives from Ethiopia, Somalia and the PDRY to find ways to a solution. All the other participants drafted us against our will into this commission.

Siad Barre carried on with his great wise man act, as the great Socialist, the great Marxist. At the same time he spoke demagogically as only one member of the "collective leadership" with a mandate from the Politburo and the need to consult with them on all matters. After a brief recess for consultations with his delegation he proposed direct talks between Mengistu and himself.

Mengistu, who had already become more insulted and mistrustful during Siad Barre's previous statements, said that he was willing to do so, but not at this time. First the question of the commission had to be resolved.

We continued the meeting at 3.15 in the morning. Siad Barre had prepared the text of an agreement in which the idea of the commission was accepted but which directed that its main purpose should be to solve the outstanding territorial questions between Somalia and Ethiopia. The commission would thus take this approach from the start. How were the Ethiopians supposed to react to such a provocative proposal?

During the break I had spoken with Mengistu, who did not hide his rejection of Siad Barre. I also spoke with Siad Barre and asked him whether he was really interested in finding a solution. He said that Mengistu would have to answer that. He went on with his revolutionary rhetoric, about how real socialists, revolutionaries, and Marxists could not deny realities. He said that Mengistu was in fact a drastic man, one who has taken drastic measures: why could he not decide similarly drastically right here and now to resolve the question?

In this setting I was faced with the complicated question of either speaking my mind about Siad Barre's position or keeping it to myself. I concluded that I had to speak out for the following reasons:

1. Keeping quiet would have meant endorsing the chauvinistic policy of Somalia, and its consequences. It would also have meant supporting the rightists in Somalia.

2. Not responding to Siad Barre would mean that any subsequent aid from socialist countries to Ethiopia, no matter how

small, would be termed by Siad Barre as a betrayal.

3. In what kind of a situation would this put the PDRY, about to support Ethiopia with tanks, trucks and artillery with the help of a Soviet ship?

In addition, Siad Barre had not only been insulting, he was resorting to subtle threats. At a certain point he said that one could not know where all of this could lead.

Because of this, I spoke up. I explained that Siad Barre did not believe that there had been a real revolution in Ethiopia, that the events of 3 February had totally answered this question and that Mengistu was a revolutionary leader. I went on to say that we considered the events in Ethiopia as a revolution, that the events of 3 February were a turning point, and that Mengistu is the leader of a profound transformation. I declared that we could not possibly agree with Siad Barre's position. I said that Siad Barre's position represented a danger to the revolution in Somalia, endangered the revolution in Ethiopia, and that as a result there was a danger of isolating the PDRY. In particular I emphasized that Siad Barre's policies were aiding the right wing in Somalia itself in its efforts against socialism, and to deliver Somalia into the arms of Saudi Arabia and Imperialism.

I said that these policies were weakening Somalia's relations with the socialist countries and would have to lead to the collapse of the revolution in Somalia. I appealed to Siad Barre's and the entire Somali leadership's sense of historical responsibility. I said that I did not think that this would come to a war between Somalia and Ethiopia but that I was worried, since war would be a very serious thing. I do not believe that there are people who would provoke a war between the peoples.

Immediately after my speaking so frankly, Siad Barre took the floor. He said that he would never want war and that as a socialist and revolutionary he would never take this path. If the socialist camp wanted to cut itself off from Somalia then that was the affair of the socialist camp. I had put pressure on him, Siad Barre, but not demanded from Mengistu, to come to this meeting.

Now, I pointed out that I had supported the summit between Siad Barre and Mengistu but did not talk about Siad Barre's insults vis-a-vis Mengistu. I said that Cuba

had no intention of cutting itself off from the Somali Revolution, rather, we supported it. The whole meeting ended without any results.

If we now give our aid to Ethiopia, Siad Barre will have no moral right to accuse us of betrayal, etc. I told him very clearly that there was a revolution in Ethiopia and that we had to help it.

In any case I had detected during my meetings with Siad Barre a certain irritation on his part with the Soviet Union. He was agitated that the Soviet Union was not delivering spare parts or tractors and that oil came too late from the Soviet Union, in spite of repeated promises. The Soviet ambassador has explained the state of affairs to us. The Somalis were repeatedly changing their minds about their requests, which had delayed the matter. In addition, unfortunately the Soviet oil tanker had sunk on its way to Somalia.

As I told Siad Barre this, he called the Soviets liars. He said this was not the position of the Soviet politburo, but rather the result of sabotage by bureaucrats. His irritation and criticism of the Soviet Union also showed in other cases. He went on to say that there was not enough drinkable water in his country and that cattle were dying, the bananas were ripening too late, all because the pumps provided by the Soviets did not work.

Because of this attitude of Siad Barre I see a great danger. That is why I considered it appropriate to give you my impressions truthfully, without euphemisms.

I wanted to discuss my point of view frankly. The socialist countries are faced with a problem. If they help Ethiopia, they will lose Siad Barre's friendship. If they do not, the Ethiopian Revolution will founder. That was the most important thing about these matters.

[comments on southern Africa, omitted here, are printed earlier in this *Bulletin*--ed.]

There were several requests for military aid from various sides: [Libyan Leader Moammar] Qaddafi, Mengistu, and the Congolese leaders. During our stay in Africa we sent [Cuban Vice President] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez to Moscow to confer with our Soviet comrades and to Havana for consultations with our leadership. In order to find the best solution we must think through this question calmly and thoroughly and consider it in terms of the overall situation of

the socialist camp. Above all we must do something for Mengistu. Already we are collecting old weapons in Cuba for Ethiopia, principally French, Belgian and Czech hand-held weapons. About 45,000 men must be supplied with weapons. We are going to send military advisers to train the Ethiopian militia in weapons-use. There are many people in Ethiopia who are qualified for the army. We are supporting the training of the militia. Meanwhile the situation in Eritrea is difficult. There are also progressive people in the liberation movement, but, objectively, they are playing a reactionary role. The Eritrean separatist movement is being supported by the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Ethiopia has good soldiers and a good military tradition, but they need time to organize their army. Mengistu asked us for 100 trainers for the militia, now he is also asking us for military advisers to build up regular units. Our military advisory group is active at the staff level. The Ethiopians have economic means and the personnel necessary to build up their army. Rumors have been spread lately that the reactionaries will conquer Asmara in two months. The revolution in Ethiopia is of great significance. With regard to military aid for the PR Congo and the Libyans we have not yet come to a decision.

I had consultations with Boumedienne in Algeria and asked for his opinion. He assured me that Algeria would never abandon Libya. Algeria is very concerned with the situation in the Mediterranean because of its security interests. It is in favor of supporting Libya, as long as military aid is confined to the socialist camp. That is not only a question between Cuba and Algeria. If we succeed in strengthening the revolution in Libya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, the PDRY, and Angola, we have an integrated strategy for the whole African continent.

Algeria would move closer to the socialist camp. It bought 1.5 billion rubles of weapons from the Soviets. Boumedienne thinks that Sadat is totally lost to us. In Syria there is also no leftist movement any more, either, especially after the Syrians defeated the progressive powers and the PLO in Lebanon.

[Indian President] Indira Gandhi gambled away the elections.

In Africa, however, we can inflict a severe defeat on the entire reactionary imperialist policy. One can free Africa from the

influence of the USA and of the Chinese. The developments in Zaire are also very important. Libya and Algeria have large national resources, Ethiopia has great revolutionary potential. So there is a great counterweight to Egypt's betrayal. It might even be possible that Sadat could be turned around and that the imperialist influence in the Middle East can be turned back.

This must all be discussed with the Soviet Union. We follow its policies and its example.

We estimate that Libya's request is an expression of trust. One should not reject their request. Cuba alone cannot help it. [remainder of conversation omitted--ed.]

[Source: Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv" (Berlin), DY30 JIV 2/201/1292; document obtained by Christian F. Ostermann and translated by David Welch with revisions by Ostermann.]

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Acting Charge d'affaires in Ethiopia S. Sinitsyn and Political Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, Herbert Malin, 9 May 1977

From the journal SECRET, Copy No. 2
of Sinitsyn, Ya.S. 26 May 1977
Original No. 203

RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION
with the Political Counselor of the USA
Embassy in Ethiopia, Herbert Malin
9 May 1977

Today at the reception at the Pakistani Embassy, Malin (acting Charge d'Affaires in connection with the recall of the latter to a meeting in Abidjan of USA ambassadors) characterized the state of Ethiopian-American relations in the following manner:

The decision of the PMAC about the closing in late April of a number of American organizations in Ethiopia (a group of military attaches, the strategic radio center in Asmara, a biological laboratory of the USA Navy, and an information center in Addis Abba), and also the abrogation beginning on 1 May of this year of the 1953 agreement "On the preservation of mutual security" (the Embassy received a verbal communication from the Foreign Ministry of Ethiopia about this) came at an unex-

pected time for the USA and raised the question of the formulation of a new USA policy towards Ethiopia in light of these conditions. This policy, Malin stated, was not yet formulated. Although the Ethiopian authorities exhibited the necessary correctness towards personnel assigned by American organizations, and with the exception of press campaigns, no hostile actions whatsoever against American citizens were observed here, nonetheless the Embassy of the USA is aware that the USA would find it difficult to institute stable business-like relations with the current Ethiopian regime. The closing of the USA economic assistance mission here [USAID] cannot be excluded. Obviously, relations in the military sphere will be broken off, although some Ethiopian military personnel continue to be trained in the USA (pilots, etc.). Under the present conditions, Washington probably will not hurry to name a new ambassador to Addis-Ababa.

According to Malin, however, all this does not mean that the USA intends to "get out of Ethiopia," considering the significance of this country for the African continent and the strategically important Red Sea region. The USA, as before, is opposed to splitting off Eritrea from Ethiopia and in favor of the freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, and has made the Ethiopian government aware of this repeatedly. At the same time the USA is concerned about the possibility of the development of a crisis situation between Ethiopia and neighboring countries and about the obvious lack of trust by the Ethiopian government in American policy in this region.

Malin considered the visit [to Moscow] by Mengistu to be a "Soviet success" and a reflection of the transition by the current Ethiopian regime to an orientation primarily towards the Soviet Union, above all in the military sphere and with the specific aim of obtaining modern weaponry. In his view, however, the Ethiopian-Soviet rapprochement could complicate relations between the USSR and Somalia and some other Arab states, and, at the same time, enhance instability in the region.

For my part, I told Malin that our policy towards Ethiopia is principled, not directed against any third countries, and responds to the interests of strengthening peace and security in the region.

NOTES: In private conversations with

us, American representatives, relying on "various sources in Washington," do not hide the fact that they are irritated by the "Ethiopia's recent anti-American actions," and this country's lack of trust in the USA. At the same time, comments by Westerners reveal that in the back of their minds they are wondering whether the Soviet Union "could assume the entire burden of assistance to Ethiopia."

It is obvious that, pursuing a policy to the detriment of the Ethiopian revolution, the USA and other Western countries will still try to maintain certain spheres of influence in this country. Thus, during the sessions of the IBRD's [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development's] "International Development Association" a no-interest credit of \$40 million was extended to Ethiopia for the purpose of road building and irrigation.

ACTING CHARGE D'AFFAIRS
OF THE USSR IN ETHIOPIA

/s/ S. Sinitsyn

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1638, ll. 142-144; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on
Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to
Moscow, 13 May 1977**

Confidential

ON THE RESULTS OF THE OFFICIAL
VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION OF
THE ETHIOPIAN STATE DELEGA-
TION LED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC)
OF SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM

In the course of negotiations the Soviet leaders and Mengistu discussed the issues of bilateral relations and relevant international questions.

The main results of the visit were covered in the Declaration signed on the initiative of the Ethiopian side about the foundations of friendly relations and cooperation between the USSR and the Socialist Ethiopia, and in the joint communique, as well as in the published news releases on the course of the visit.

Beside the declaration about the founda-

tions of friendly relations and cooperation between the USSR and Ethiopia, [the two sides] also signed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation, a consular convention, a protocol on economic and technical cooperation which envisages assistance to Ethiopia in [construction] of a number of industrial and agricultural objects, provision of buying credit and the commission of Soviet experts.

According to the wishes of the Ethiopian side, an agreement was signed on some additional deliveries of armaments and military equipment to Ethiopia.

The visit of the Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam to the USSR had an obvious goal - to establish direct personal contacts with the Soviet leaders and to ensure the support of the Soviet Union for the cause of the protection and development of the national-democratic revolution in Ethiopia.

On May 6 of this year Mengistu was received by General Secretary of the CC CPSU L.I. Brezhnev. At this talk he informed L.I. Brezhnev on the activities of the new Ethiopian leadership who took a course toward the socialist orientation of the country. On behalf of the Ethiopian people the Chairman of the PMAC expressed profound gratitude for the assistance the Soviet Union renders to Ethiopia in the defense of [its] revolutionary conquests.

L.I. Brezhnev underscored our principled position with regard to progressive transformations in Ethiopia and declared that the Soviet Union, which from the very beginning came out in favor of the Ethiopian revolution, intends to continue this course and to give, as much as it can, political, diplomatic, and other forms of assistance to the new leadership of Ethiopia. L.I. Brezhnev drew Mengistu's attention to the fact it was important, in order to advance the revolutionary process, to create a party of the working class, the intention that the leader of the Ethiopian state had voiced, and to the necessity to activate the international affairs of Ethiopia with the aim of foiling the encroachments of imperialist and other reactionary forces. L.I. Brezhnev expressed concern about the continuing deterioration of relations between the two progressive states that are friendly to us - Ethiopia and Somalia, and pointed to the urgent need to take measures for the improvement of these relations.

Mengistu voiced profound satisfaction with the meeting and the frank, comradely character of the talks.

During negotiations with N.V. Podgorny, A.A. Gromyko, and other Soviet comrades the head of the Ethiopian delegation informed them about the roots of the Ethiopian revolution and its course at the present stage, about internal and external difficulties the new leadership of the country experiences today. Mengistu said that the Ethiopian leadership stands on the platform of Marxism-Leninism and regards the Ethiopian revolution as part of the world revolutionary process. He stressed his intention to create a working class party in Ethiopia. However, he said, the Ethiopian revolution is going through a complicated, one can even say, critical phase. Rightist, as well as ultra-leftist elements, are rising, de facto, in a united front against the revolution. They unleashed a virtual civil war in some provinces of the country. These actions of domestic counterrevolution are linked to the activities of imperialism and other external reactionary forces directed against the new Ethiopia. Mengistu underlined that a special role in these coordinated activities belong to the anti-Communist regime of Numeiri, and behind its back lurk reactionary Arab countries, first of all Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The head of the Ethiopian delegation said that Ethiopia will not overcome external and internal counterrevolution alone, and for that reason it relies on support on the part of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. He expressed a wish to develop all-faceted cooperation with the USSR.

Mengistu supplied detailed information on the policy of the Ethiopian leadership on the nationalities question, on his intention to resolve it on a democratic basis in the framework of the unified multinational state. The Ethiopian side judges that the separatist movement in Eritrea, which receives massive support from the Arab countries, acquired a reactionary character after the victory of the national-democratic revolution in Ethiopia.

Mengistu spoke with concern about the position that the Somali leadership took towards the Ethiopian revolution. He favored normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia and the united efforts of the two progressive states in the struggle against imperialism and reaction.

The Soviet side expressed understanding of the difficulties the new Ethiopian leadership encounters inside the country and outside its frontiers. The Ethiopian delegation was informed about the measures the Soviet leadership undertakes in support of Ethiopia in the international arena, in particular in connection with the anti-Ethiopian position of the ruling circles of Sudan and to the arms supplies to the Eritrean separatists from a number of Arab states. The Soviet Union was said to continue henceforth to give assistance to the new Ethiopia.

[The Soviet side] explained our position on major international issues, including the relaxation of tensions, the situation in the South Africa, in the Middle East; in response to the Ethiopian side we informed her about Soviet-American and Soviet-Chinese relations. Mengistu spoke about common views between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union on the crucial issues of international affairs. He said that he shared the viewpoint of the Soviet side regarding the essence of differences between the USSR and China and, on his part, pointed out to the difference of positions between Ethiopia and China on a number of issues, including the situation in the African Horn.

Mengistu gave the impression of a serious figure who firmly believes in his cause, although he still lacks sufficient political and state experience. In particular, it seems that he and other Ethiopian leaders do not devote due attention to vigorous measures in the international arena in order to foil the attempts to drive Ethiopia into international isolation, [and] to win over world public opinion, first of all in the progressive states of Africa.

Mengistu and the members of the Ethiopian delegation estimated highly the results of the negotiations in Moscow and expressed thanks for the understanding with which the Soviet side addressed their needs. They expressed the opinion that the results of their visit will contribute to the further improvement of Soviet-Ethiopian relations.

We in the Soviet Union believe that the visit and talks with the Ethiopian state delegation was fruitful and useful.

The Ethiopian leadership, in our opinion, should be granted the support of the Socialist Commonwealth.

[Source: SAPMO, JIV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav

M. Zubok.]

Additions to 2 February 1977 Report by Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, on "Somalia's Territorial Disagreements with Ethiopia and the Position of the USSR," apparently in late May-early June 1977

[...] On 16 March 1977, a meeting took place in Aden between President Siad and PMAC Chairman Mengistu with the participation of Fidel Castro and the Chairman of the Presidential Council of South Yemen, Rubayi-i-Ali.

Mengistu appealed to Siad for the coordination of actions to rebuff imperialist and reactionary forces which simultaneously threaten both Ethiopia and Somalia. Siad held to an intransigent position, putting forth the annexation of the Ogaden to Somalia as an immutable condition for normalizing Somali-Ethiopian relations. He demanded that the issue of the transfer of the Ogaden to Somalia be quickly resolved, with the subsequent formation of a federation between Somalia and Ethiopia. At the meeting Siad declared that if the socialist countries would not support Somalia on the territorial issue, then he would be required to appeal to Arab and Western states for assistance.

The representative of South Yemen put forward a proposal to create a committee made up of high-ranking representatives of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, and Cuba for resolution of disputed Somali-Ethiopian issues. Siad refused to work in that committee. However, until now that proposal remains in force.

[...]

At a meeting of the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, N.V. Podgorny, with Siad Barre which took place at the beginning of April of this year during his brief visit to Somalia, Siad expressed readiness to continue the search for a mutually acceptable formula for resolving the problems facing Ethiopia and Somalia and requested the Soviet Union to provide help in organizing a meeting with Mengistu.

At Soviet-Ethiopian negotiations which took place during the official visit to the Soviet Union of the official Ethiopian delegation headed by the Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam during 4-8

May 1977, the Ethiopian side was informed of N.V. Podgorny's recent conversation with Siad Barre. In accord with the wish of President Siad, we proposed to Mengistu that through our good offices we organize and conduct in the Soviet Union a summit meeting for the establishment of good-neighborly relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. Mengistu accepted that suggestion with satisfaction and expressed agreement with the thoughts that had been expressed to him in this regard. However, in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on 17 May of this year, President Siad declared that he is not ready at the present time to sit at the negotiating table with Mengistu. [...]

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1619, ll. 61-68; translated by Paul Henze.]

Report from CPSU CC to SED CC, Information about the Visit to the Soviet Union of Somalia Vice President Samanta, late May-early June 1977

Strictly Confidential

[notation: "EH 6.6.77"]

I N F O R M A T I O N

on the visit of the First Vice-President of Somalia Mohammad Ali Samantar to the Soviet Union in the end of May-early June

At first Samantar was in Moscow unofficially, then at joint agreement it was decided to publicize the fact of his presence in the Soviet Union.

Samantar held conversations with the CC CPSU Politburo member, Minister of Foreign Affairs A.A. Gromyko and the alternate member of the CC CPSU Politburo, CC CPSU Secretary B.N. Ponomarev. Upon conclusion of these talks Samantar was received by General Secretary of the CC CPSU L.I. Brezhnev. They discussed on a principled level the main directions of the Soviet-Somali relations and reaffirmed a political line of the USSR and the SDR, aimed at the development of cooperation between them in various fields.

In the course of conversations in Moscow, aside from the issues of the Soviet-Somalian relations, a major focus was on the issues connected to the situation in the area of the African Horn, on which [issues] our side laid out the position that is well known

also to the Ethiopian leadership. Soviet-Ethiopian relations, for understandable reasons, took a special place in the conversations.

Samantar concentrated his attention on the disagreements between Somalia and Ethiopia on the territorial question. In justifying the positions of the SDR he mentioned the well-known Somalian arguments. Samantar did not dispute the revolutionary character of the regime of Ethiopia, as the Somalis have done before. Yet he hinted that not everything is normal in the domestic situation in Ethiopia, that the rights of the persons of Somalian extraction who live in Ogaden are still allegedly impinged upon. Samantar said that the leadership of Ethiopia, instead of turning to persuasion as the main tool of bringing the population [of Ogaden] over to its side, all too often resorts to arms.

Our side repeatedly underscored the idea that the main thing now is to avoid military confrontation between Somalia and Ethiopia. We drew [his] attention to the perversity of a situation when two states - Somalia and Ethiopia - who set themselves on the path of revolutionary development are at loggerheads. Of course, we know about the differences of opinion between Somalia and Ethiopia, first of all on the territorial issue. But if a war breaks out between them, only imperialist forces would gain from this. Such a war not only would lead to grave consequences, it would also turn against Somalia and would allow reactionary forces to put a noose around its neck.

L.I. Brezhnev stressed in this regard that one should not allow a military confrontation to flare up between the two progressive states of Africa, and that all issues and disputes between them should be resolved in a peaceful way, at the negotiation table.

As to the domestic situation in Ethiopia, we declared it was not our business to discuss such issues. The Ethiopians themselves should resolve them.

In our opinion, there were two important points that surfaced in the course of the discussions.

First. If earlier we had the impression that the Somali leadership vacillated with regard to a meeting with the leadership of Ethiopia and to a mission of good-will on the part of the Soviet Union in the organization of such a meeting, now Samantar declared that the Somalis are ready for this.

In response to our direct question when and on which level the Somalian side would expect to hold such a meeting, he said that any time would be good for them, but did not mention any dates. In Samantar's opinion, at first there could be a ministerial meeting, and a final stage could be held as a summit. At the same time, Samantar let us understand that before the organization of such a meeting we should define a range of issues for discussion, by emphasizing that for the Somalis in the focus is still the territorial issue. Concerning the participation of Soviet representatives in a meeting, Samantar did not define their level, did not say that it [the level] should be high.

Second. Of great importance is Samantar's declaration that the Somali leadership would not on its own initiative unleash an armed conflict with Ethiopia. He said it twice during his meetings with A.A. Gromyko and B.N. Ponomarev. He made a similar pronouncement in his conversation with L.I. Brezhnev.

True, Samantar spoke about a scenario of provocation of such a conflict on the part of external imperialist forces or their helpers. To this we reacted in the following way: if such forces were around, then both sides, Somalia and Ethiopia, should not respond to such a provocation, but should display state wisdom and vigilance.

On the whole, the visit of Samantar to Moscow was, in our opinion, useful. It shows that the leadership of Somalia does not drop the idea to begin, with assistance of the Soviet Union, a dialogue with the leaders of Ethiopia in order to normalize relations between the two countries.

[Source: SAPMO, JIV 2/202 584; obtained and translated from Russian by V. Zubok.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P.
Ratanov and Mengistu, 29 June 1977**

SECRET, copy No. 2

From the journal of 18 July 1977
Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 255

RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION
with the President of the PMAC,
MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM
29 June 1977

Today I visited Mengistu Haile Mariam

and, as authorized by the Center [Moscow], outlined the Soviet position on Ethiopian-Somali relations, highlighting the threat that military conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia would pose to the revolutionary achievements in both countries.

Mengistu then thanked the Soviet leadership for its efforts in pursuit of the normalization of Ethiopia-Somali relations and stated the following:

The PMAC's position on Ethiopian-Somali relations remains unchanged - it supported and continues to support the improvement of relations with Somalia through negotiations and the restoration of cooperation with this country in the struggle against a common enemy - imperialism. In light of this, the PMAC assumes that, unlike Sudan, which completely went over to the side of imperialism, Somalia remains a country which claims to adhere to scientific socialism and has friendly relations with socialist states, a situation which would create favorable conditions for the restoration of friendly relations and cooperation between Somalia and Ethiopia, and also influences the study of Marxism-Leninism and the establishment of close cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist states.

In response to the appeal from the Soviet government, the PMAC would like to emphasize once more that Ethiopia does not have any aggressive intentions with respect to Somalia. The PMAC already informed the Soviet government that it has accepted the proposal by Siad Barre to organize a Somali-Ethiopian meeting on an expert level. Clearly, Ethiopia will not go to this meeting as a supplicant, but as an equal partner.

Ethiopia is prepared to contribute to the efforts of the Soviet Union to prevent Somalia from shifting to the right, as can be observed today. As far as Ethiopia is concerned, Somalia is already engaged in subversive activities against it in the guise of a Front for the Liberation of Western Somalia, the headquarters of which is located in Mogadishu. Armed units of this front have taken some villages in eastern Ethiopia. These units are even armed with Soviet-made anti-aircraft missiles. Naturally, Ethiopian forces must combat the units of this force.

In conclusion, Mengistu made a request to the Soviet government to lend its support to efforts to achieve a withdrawal of Somali forces from Ethiopian territory.

Responding to a question from the Soviet ambassador, Mengistu said that relations between Ethiopia and the Republic of Djibouti were not bad, but that the leadership of this Republic, fearing annexation by Ethiopia or Somalia, agreed to a French military presence. Under these conditions, said Mengistu, if it were possible to restore cooperation between Ethiopia and Somalia, then these countries could affirm that they guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Djibouti, which would facilitate the withdrawal of French forces from Djibouti and the development of this state along a progressive path.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
IN SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

/s/ A RATANOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 74-75; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia
A.N. Ratanov and Cuban military
official Arnaldo Ochoa, 17 July 1977**

TOP SECRET Copy No. 2

From the journal of 24 August 1977
A.P. RATANOV Orig. No. 297

REPORT OF CONVERSATION
with the head of the Cuban military
specialists Division General
ARNALDO OCHOA
17 July 1977

During the discussion held at the Soviet Embassy, the Soviet Ambassador outlined the following considerations on the military and political situation in Ethiopia.

The capture of several strategically important objectives in Eritrea and in the eastern regions of Ethiopia by the separatists and by the Somalis has showed that the PMAC:

1. Underestimated the military capabilities of the Eritrean separatists, and thus did not take serious measures to strengthen the group of troops in Eritrea. At the same time the PMAC was hoping that it would be able to persuade the leadership of the Eritrean organizations to take part in negotiations on the political settlement of the Eritrean problem.

2. Did not expect that the units of the Somali regular army in Ogaden would par-

ticipate directly in the military actions. It is significant that the Ethiopian command did not take measures for building a defensive barrier in the regions adjacent to Somalia. Apparently, the PMAC was concerned that such measures could be perceived by Somalia as an Ethiopian refusal to settle their disagreements with Somalia peacefully.

3. Overestimated its own military capabilities. Did not take into account the fact that the old army practically did not go through the school of revolutionary struggle even though it took part in the revolution, since the main demands of the rank and file soldiers were for a raise in pay and for improvement of the retirement pensions, and a certain part of the officer corps was against the Revolution altogether.

It should be also mentioned that in relation to Eritrea, during the three years since the Revolution the Ethiopian command has never attempted any offensive military operations against the Eritrean armed forces, and that the troops of the Ethiopian regular army were practically dwelling in their quarters.

Only two or three months ago the PMAC, having received weapons from the socialist countries, hastily began to organize new units of the regular army, and the people's militia.

Currently the armed forces of Ethiopia consist of 6 divisions of the regular army (55 thousand people), 8 divisions of the people's militia (about 100 thousand people), and police formations (40 thousand people). However:

1. The Ethiopian army is inferior to the Somali army in the quality of armaments.

2. The members of the people's militia have not had a sufficient military training yet.

All this led to the situation where the separatists were able to establish control over 75-80% of the Eritrean territory, including the cities of Keren, Nacfa, Karora, Decamere, Tessenei. Their armed forces consist of 18 thousand people.

The Ethiopian command in Eritrea has 20 thousand soldiers of the regular army, and it is currently transferring there 5 divisions of the people's militia. This should give it the opportunity to establish control over Eritrea assuming that Sudan does not introduce its armed forces there.

If the military effort in Eritrea is successful, the PMAC hopes that the separat-

ists and the Arab countries who support them would have to agree to a political settlement and accept internal autonomy for Eritrea.

In the Ogaden the detachments of the Front of for the Liberation of Western Somalia (up to 5 thousand people), introduced mainly from Somalia, have recently established control over the most part of the territory. The front is engaged in combat near the cities of Harar, Jijiga, Gode, Dire Dawa.

The PMAC has up to 10 thousand people in the Ogaden. Currently detachments of the people's militia are being transferred there. The Ethiopian command considers the situation in the Ogaden most dangerous since Somalia continues to transfer its military personnel and heavy weaponry to that region.

Therefore, the PMAC has a opportunity to change favorably the military situation in Eritrea as well as in the Ogaden. However, it would need to solve the following problems.

1. To provide the armed forces with the means of transportation (helicopters, trucks, etc.) for a quick transfer of the reserves when and where they are needed.

2. To create fuel reserves and to obtain means of transportation for them.

3. To create reserves of food and medicines.

Also it is necessary to strengthen the political work in the armed forces, for which they would need cadres of political workers, which are currently insufficient.

In socio-political terms the forces of the revolution predominate over the forces of the counterrevolution. Still, even though the PMAC undertook certain measures for the organization of the peasant and urban population (peasant and urban associations have been created everywhere), the level of political consciousness of the broad masses of the population (mostly illiterate) remains very low.

Elements of confusion can be observed in the Defense Council. Mengistu Haile Mariam still remains the main leader of the Ethiopian revolution. The PMAC needs to solve the following political tasks:

1. To take additional measures to strengthen its social base. In order to achieve this it is necessary to make the socio-economic policy more concrete, so that it could assure the peasants that the land would remain in their possession, and that the regime would not rush with collectivization. In ad-

dition, some measures in order to, as a minimum, neutralize the national bourgeoisie, are necessary to assure it that the regime would not expropriate its property.

2. To develop the nationality policy and to make it more concrete (to create autonomous national regions), even though now it would not be an easy task because cadres from non-Amhara nationalities which were discriminated against before the revolution have not been prepared yet.

3. To create a political party and a broad people's front with participation of not just workers and peasants, but also with the national bourgeoisie.

4. To conduct a more active foreign policy, especially toward African countries, to provide support for Mengistu's statements at the OAU Assembly in Libreville [Gabon] that Ethiopia was not going to export its revolution, and that it would follow the course of nonalignment; to make the program for political settlement of the Ethiopian-Somali disagreements more concrete.

In the course of further discussion we came to common conclusions that the difficult situation dictated the necessity of creating in some form a state defense committee, which would be authorized to mobilize all forces of the country for the defense of the revolution; of organizing the highest military command, and at a minimum, of two fronts (Northern and Eastern) with corresponding command and headquarters structures.

We also agreed that the current structuring of the armed forces should be reorganized in the future according to modern military concepts applicable to Ethiopian realities. However, the military incompetence of the officer corps and conservatism of a certain part of it present obstacles to this restructuring. For example, the General Staff currently nurtures ideas of creating tank divisions and an anti-aircraft defense system of the country by removing those kinds of weapons (tanks, anti-aircraft launchers) from existing infantry divisions.

On July 16 the Cuban comrades found out that at the last moment before the group of [PMAC General Secretary] Fikre Selassie Wogderes was about to leave for Moscow it was decided to ask the Soviet Union to supply tanks, armored cars, and the like at a time when they have not yet prepared their cadres for work with the technology they were receiving from the Soviet Union ac-

ording to the agreements signed earlier. Arnaldo Ochoa told Mengistu that such a light-headed approach to serious business might undermine the prestige of the Military Council. Arnaldo Ochoa had the feeling that Mengistu understood what he meant.

Another example of such a light-headed, even irresponsible, approach to the military questions is the idea that somebody is suggesting to Mengistu about the necessity of preparation of a offensive on Hargeisa (Somalia), which would give Somalia a reason to start a more massive offensive in the Ogaden with tanks and aircraft, not to mention the catastrophic political consequences of such a step for Ethiopia.

Arnaldo Ochoa said that the military failures in Eritrea led to certain disagreements within the PMAC. A significant part of the Council proposes that they should now, before any military measures are taken, try once more to engage in negotiations with the Eritrean organizations. The majority of the Council, however, thinks that in the existing circumstances, when the separatists are on the offensive, they would not agree to negotiations, or they would present ultimatums demanding the separation of Eritrea. Therefore, the majority of the Council believes a combination of military and political measures should be undertaken, i.e. to propose negotiations to the Eritrean organizations only after having achieved some military successes.

Arnaldo Ochoa also informed me that in one of their recent conversations Mengistu said that Ethiopian-Chinese relations were becoming more and more complicated with every day. The PMAC found out that the PRC was providing military assistance to the People's Front of Eritrean Liberation. In relation to this, the PMAC made a decision to limit all relations with Beijing to the minimum without engaging in an open confrontation, and to devise measures against Chinese ideological penetration in Ethiopia.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
IN SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

[signature] /A RATANOV/

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, ll. 141-146; translated by S. Savranskaya.]

Record of Negotiations between Somali

and Soviet Officials in Moscow, 25-29 July 1977 (excerpts)

From the journal of Secret. Copy no. 10
L.F. Ilchev 11 August 1977
No. 2148/GS

Record of a Conversation
with the Minister of Mineral and Water
Resources of Somalia, Head of Delegation
of Experts
HUSSEIN ABDULKADIR KASIM
(first level)

The Somali Delegation of Experts arrived in Moscow on 24 July 1977. Meetings took place at the residence of the Somali Delegation from 25-29 July 1977.

25 July

In a one-on-one conversation which took place on the initiative of H. A. Kasim, before the beginning of the first meeting the Minister announced that the Somali delegation had arrived in Moscow with a feeling of good will and with absolute faith in the efforts of the Soviet Union to offer its good services toward the resolution of disputed issues between Somalia and Ethiopia. The Somali delegation, in the words of Kasim, experiences doubt, however, as to the candor and good intentions of the Ethiopian side, taking into account that Somalia had repeatedly proposed to Ethiopia to resolve the disputed issues within the framework of creating a federation of the two governments, to which Ethiopia reacted by publishing the protocols of secret negotiations between the two sides and by carrying out a campaign attacking Somalia in the press.

As is well known, other African and non-African countries attempted to play the role of mediator in the settlement of the disputed questions between the two countries, but these efforts were not crowned with success.

The Somali delegation considers that the object of discussion at the forthcoming meeting of experts, in addition to the substance of the disputed issues between the two countries, should include neither the tension in relations between the two countries, nor the questions of demarcation or of changing the borders, but rather the colonial situation which currently characterizes a part of the Somali territory and the popu-

lation living there, which is under the colonial government of Ethiopia. The Somali delegation considers that no country should call itself a socialist country, or a country which adheres to a socialist orientation, if this country continues the colonial oppression of a people and a part of the territory of another country. This colonial situation arose in the time of the existence of the Ethiopian Empire and up to Somali independence. In the opinion of the Somali side, the changing of the name Abyssinia to Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian Empire to Socialist Ethiopia did not change in the slightest degree the state of affairs. This is why the Somali delegation considers that the central question for discussion at the forthcoming meetings of the delegations of experts from the two countries is the question of granting self-determination and independence to the oppressed Somali minority, which lives within the borders of Ethiopia.

At the forthcoming negotiations, continued the Minister, there are two alternatives: either [his aforementioned proposed topic, or] to limit the discussion to a range of secondary problems, which would be tantamount to simply beating about the bush. Somalia considers, that the military actions currently being conducted are the actions of Somali patriots in the colonial territory who are struggling for their right to self-determination and independence, therefore the first question on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of experts should be the question of decolonialization, and, only having resolved that question, will it be possible to move on to the discussion of other secondary questions, such as the lessening of tension in relations between the two countries.

H.A. Kasim noted that the currently existing situation is a result of the fact that Ethiopia, over the course of many years, violated the territorial integrity of Somalia, [and] oppressed and annihilated Somalis, living in the colonized territory.

In conclusion, H.A. Kasim underscored the readiness of the Somali delegation to assist the Soviet side in fulfilling its mission of offering its good services at the meeting of the delegations of experts from Somalia and Ethiopia.

For my part, I declared that the tension which has been created in the relations between two countries, with both of whom we are friendly, is the cause of great alarm and anxiety. I underscored the impossibility of

resolving the disputed questions by means of the application of force, particularly given the contemporary global situation. I took note of the real danger that such tension might be used by enemies of Africa, enemies of progressive transformations in Somalia as well as in Ethiopia. I remarked that there are no questions in the interrelations of socialist countries or countries of socialist orientation, which could not be resolved without the application of force, by peaceful means. The Soviet side, offering its good services, sees its task at the forthcoming meeting of the delegations of experts in the following:

- 1) To create an atmosphere of goodwill between the two countries;
- 2) to ensure an understanding of the fact that it is impossible to resolve disputed questions through force;
- 3) to undertake efforts to ensure that as a result of the meetings of experts there would be recommendations elaborated to the governments of both of these countries with the goal of creating a situation of friendship and good relations as a basis for resolving the disputed questions which exist between Somalia and Ethiopia.

I indicated that the Soviet side did not intend to impose any particular resolution of the disputed questions between the two countries.

After the conclusion of the one-on-one conversation a meeting of the Soviet representatives and the Somali delegation of experts took place.

I greeted the delegation of Somali experts and expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Somali and Ethiopian parties had decided to begin a dialogue toward the normalization of their relations in Moscow.

I announced that, having concurred with the request of President Siad that we offer our good services in organizing and leading the meetings between representatives of Somalia and Ethiopia in Moscow, the Soviet side was guided exclusively by its international obligations to offer assistance to countries with whom we are on friendly terms, by its interests in the development and strengthening of all-around cooperation with them.

I noted that we treat the parties without biases of any sort, in a friendly and candid manner.

I expressed the hope that the forthcom-

ing Somali-Ethiopian meeting would lead to positive results. I said, that it would not be candid for us not to say that the current situation in the region had grown complicated and that decisive and immediate measures were necessary. We would hope that the two delegations would strive from the very beginning to create a business-like atmosphere, to show their good will, [to take a] constructive approach and not to take categorical positions, which have the nature of ultimatums, and would rule out even the slightest possibility of conducting negotiations.

We are convinced that the normalization of the situation in the Horn of Africa and the establishment of friendly relations with Ethiopia is in the interest of Somalia. It is clear that a peaceful situation, and friendly ties with Ethiopia would create more favorable conditions for the successful resolution of complicated problems pertaining to the national economy, which confront this country, in its attempts to raise the well-being of the Somali workers.

I said that we would like hear the full opinion of the Somali delegation concerning the range of questions, which the delegation considers necessary to submit to a joint discussion, and likewise concerning the procedure for the meeting, in particular, with regard to its general duration, and other procedural questions. From our side, we have no intention of imposing any temporal limit on the meeting and are prepared to take into account, insofar as it is possible, the wishes of the two parties in this regard.

I noted further that, as we know, the Somali side proposes to discuss the issue of the Ethiopian government's concession of the right to self-determination of national groups. We are unable to predict beforehand what might be the position of the Ethiopian government, but we can surmise, that such a formulation of the question will most likely be interpreted by the Ethiopian government as interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

We know, as you do, that the Ethiopian leadership in its programmatic documents announced its intention to resolve the nationalities question on a democratic basis. It goes without saying that the realization of such a program requires the appropriate conditions.

To our mind, the examination of the issue of normalizing relations between the

two countries at the meeting of experts, and precisely this, as we understand, is their first and foremost task, should not be made conditional upon the preliminary resolution of fundamentally disputed questions. This is a point of view which we have expressed more than once to the Somali leadership and it was not met with objections by their side.

The meeting of the delegation with the good services of our side would be genuinely successful if it was concluded by the elaboration by the experts of recommendations to their governments concerning the steps which would lead to the normalization of Somali-Ethiopian relations.

The Soviet side is prepared to cooperate and to offer all possible assistance to the experts of both sides in their elaboration of recommendations for their governments, but does not plan to insist on any particular position. We are prepared to assist actively in the search for a mutually acceptable resolution. If the desire should be expressed, the Somali and the Ethiopian delegations may meet without the participation of the Soviet representatives.

We would be prepared after the meeting with the Ethiopian delegation, if it should be deemed necessary, to engage in further discussion with the Somali experts with the objective of working out a unified approach, of identifying a range of questions, which would be appropriate to discuss, and likewise of identifying procedural questions.

The views which might be expressed in this connection by our delegation, may be reduced, in summary, to the following:

- 1) the acknowledgment that the continuation of tensions between the two countries is not consistent with the interest of the Ethiopian and Somali nations;
- 2) the renunciation by the two sides of the use of force in the resolution of disputed questions; the attempt to apply every effort to their settlement by peaceful means, by means of negotiations;
- 3) the obligation of the two sides to maintain peace and security on their borders, to abstain from every sort of hostile activity, from engaging in hostile propaganda against one another by means of the mass media and to foster, in every possible way, those efforts which will lead to the development of

friendly relations;

4) the efforts of the two countries to take measures which are directed at developing economic, trade, and cultural relations, at developing connections between voluntary organizations in the two countries, the exchange of experience, etc., and, in particular, the readiness of the two sides to conduct regular mutual consultations at all levels.

It goes without saying that first and foremost it is necessary to cease military activities on both sides.

The principled efforts of the Soviet Union toward the development of all-around cooperation with the Somali Democratic Republic are well known. Our country has never been guided in its policy by opportunistic considerations. The Soviet Union will continue in the future to strengthen its friendship and revolutionary solidarity with the nation of Somalia, to offer assistance and support in full accordance with the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between our countries.

July 26

[...] [I] Remarked for my part, that the interlocutor repeated all of those factors, which had been expressed by him during the previous discussion. Meanwhile, the situation in the Horn of Africa continues to become more complicated and explosive. We think that this situation dictates the necessity of introducing certain amendments to the considerations of the two parties.

From the declaration of the Somali delegation it follows that the delegation possesses the authority to discuss only territorial problems. We were told that the efforts of the Somali leadership, the efforts of the leaders of certain African countries, and likewise the efforts of Comrade F. Castro in the settlement of the disputed problems of Somali and Ethiopia did not meet with success. From this [fact] should the conclusion be drawn that, insofar as the efforts of third countries have not been successful, the disputed questions must be resolved with the assistance of arms, by means of open military actions? Our point of view is that all disputed questions should be resolved by peaceful means, by means of negotiations. For the sake of this objective no efforts of any sort should be begrudged.

The Soviet side regarded with satisfac-

tion the declaration of President Siad that Somalia would never, not under any circumstances, attempt to resolve disputed questions with the assistance of arms. This was discussed in the message to L.I. Brezhnev, and the same declaration was made by the Somali party-state delegation which visited the USSR in the previous year. In a word, we have been assured of this more than once and on various levels. We have treated this declaration with complete faith.

However, certain information we possess bears witness to the fact that open military actions have currently commenced. Regular military units in Somalia, using tanks and aviation, have crossed the Somali-Ethiopian border. I want to stress, that we are discussing concrete facts, not conjecture.

From our point of view, in order to resolve any sort of problem which has arisen between states, first and foremost it is necessary to have a favorable atmosphere. We, as the party which is offering its good services, consider that the central task should now comprise the cessation of military actions. This is the appeal we make to both the Somali and the Ethiopian sides.

It is our opinion that the issue currently stands as follows: either the Horn of Africa will become an arena where imperialist and reactionary intrigues are carried out, or by our common efforts we will succeed in turning the Horn of Africa into a region of friendly relations and peace.

We appeal to both delegations to take a seat at the negotiating table, to speak forth their own views and, correspondingly, to listen fully to each other's point of view, having devoted their full attention to the search for a path to the normalization of the relations between the two countries.

This is our point of view.

[...] Returning to the bilateral Somali-Ethiopian meeting, H.A. Kasim said, that if the question should be raised concerning the military actions of Somalia against Ethiopia, that the Somali delegation would have nothing further to discuss at the negotiating table. A war is going on between Ethiopia and the liberation movement of the Somali people who live in occupied territory. The struggle is being conducted precisely by this movement, and not by the Somali Democratic Republic.

What military actions should be ceased? After all we are discussing a struggle for liberation, and, as is well known,

from the moment of the Great October socialist revolution the Soviet Union has invariably supported liberation movements in all corners of the globe. The very activities of the Soviet Union in the United Nations are a testimony to this fact.

I would like to repeat once more that we are prepared to sit down at the negotiating table, if the Ethiopian side will discuss the territorial dispute as a fundamental issue, but if the Ethiopian side will only put forward the issue of the alleged Somali military actions, then there will not be any progress either in the work of this meeting, or in our bilateral relations.

I do not know, H.A. Kasim said in conclusion, whether the Soviet Union will be able to do anything under these circumstances. Unfortunately, we have the dismal example of the mediation of F. Castro, when Mengistu Haile Mariam declared the inexpedience of raising the territorial question, but was prepared to discuss any other questions of secondary importance.

Trust in our candor, we will regret it if the good services of the USSR do not lead to a positive result.

July 29

[...] Taking into account the separate exchanges of opinion taking place with the main Somali and Ethiopian delegations, the Soviet representative, by way of offering his good services, will introduce for consideration in the course of the work an idea of the first steps, which would lead toward the normalization of relations between Somalia and Ethiopia:

- 1) The renunciation of the application of force in the resolution of disputed questions. The assumption of immediate measures in the cessation of military and other hostile activities.
- 2) The assumption by both parties of the obligation to maintain peace and security on the borders.
- 3) To abstain from conducting hostile propaganda against one another by means of the mass media, to encourage efforts which would lead to the development of friendly relations.
- 4) The acknowledgment by both parties of the fact that maintaining tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia is not consistent with the interests of their peoples and impedes the unification of

their efforts in the struggle against the common enemy, imperialism.

5) The two parties express their agreement to establish and maintain contacts with each other at a variety of levels in the interests of reaching the above-mentioned goals.

[I] underscored the fact that we regard this as a working document which contains the recommendations of the Soviet side, which is fulfilling its mission to offer good services. It goes without saying that we are proceeding from the assumption that it will be brought to the attention of the Somali government.

H.A. Kasim declared that the Somali delegation had nothing to add to the considerations which the delegation had expressed earlier, and offered his assurance that the recommendations which were expressed by the Soviet side, would be brought to the attention of the Somali leadership.

[...] [I] thanked H.A. Kasim for his communication and said that I would like to make note again of certain elements, which were contained in the message of response from L.I. Brezhnev to Siad Barre's appeal to him in May of this year. "In agreeing to offer our good services," announced L.I. Brezhnev, "we approach this matter with seriousness and a sense of responsibility. We think that it should be possible to begin a dialogue on a broad basis with the goal of establishing good relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. We consider that the key which might open the road to cooperation in the search for a settlement to difficult disputed problems lies in neighborly relations in the Horn of Africa."

It is hardly necessary for me to comment on this text; it speaks for itself.

The Soviet Union offered its good services even before the exacerbation of relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. But even after this exacerbation we consider it necessary to continue our mission, in order to achieve the improvement of relations between the two countries, to create a favorable atmosphere for the successful discussion of all disputed issues.

Meanwhile, while our consultations are going on, the Soviet leaders have appealed twice with a personal message to President Siad. As recently as yesterday, L.I. Brezhnev sent President Siad a personal message, the substance of which, in brief, consisted of his desire that the Somali side

should take the appropriate steps and should stop the escalation of tension.

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1620, ll. 3-31; translation by Sally Kux.]

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Mengistu, 29 July 1977

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2
From diary of 9 August 1977
A. P. RATANOV Ser. No. 276

NOTES OF CONVERSATION
with Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia
HAILE MARIAMOM MENGISTU
29 July 1977

We received a visit from Mengistu and transmitted to him a message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev in response to a communication from Mengistu, which was presented to Comrade Brezhnev for Comrade A. P. Kirilenko by the General Secretary of the PMAC, Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

Mengistu asked that we convey to Comrade Brezhnev his deep appreciation for the fraternal and candid message. We agreed, and conveyed to Mengistu the advice contained in the communication.

Mengistu placed great value on the fact that the Soviet Union is rendering support to Ethiopia, notwithstanding that this is leading to definite complications in Soviet-Somali relations. We understand, said Mengistu in this connection, that the Soviet Union is confronted with a complex dilemma: rendering military assistance to Ethiopia, it risks a loss of its opportunity in Somalia (e.g., Berbera). We are considering these questions, said Mengistu, and consider ourselves accountable to the revolutionary debt inhering in the obligation to take into account the interests of the Soviet Union in this region. Together with this, he observed, we hope that the victory of the Ethiopian anti-imperialist revolution will contribute to the common revolutionary cause.

In response to the representations of the Soviet Ambassador (the conference with Mengistu was one on one) that it is necessary to struggle not against Somalia, but in support of Somalia, Mengistu said that he agreed with this. So far, for example, the PMAC has not rendered support to the forces in Somalia which are operating

against Siad Barre and seeking assistance in Ethiopia. We are not organizing, said Mengistu, partisan movements in Somalia, although specific opportunities for that have presented themselves and continue to do so. At the same time, representations of Eritrean organizations have been established in Mogadishu, along with a people's revolutionary party, the Ethiopian Democratic Union, and Fronts for the Liberation of Tigray and Oromia, not to mention the headquarters of the "Revolutionary Front of Western Somalia."

In response to the representations of the Soviet Ambassador, following on the directives of communications from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, concerning the need for preservation of a dialogue with Somalia, Mengistu proclaimed that he was in agreement with the concepts and representations of Comrade L. I. Brezhnev. We accepted, he continued, the suggestions of the Soviet Union regarding the organization of a Somali-Ethiopian meeting in Moscow, when Somalia cut short its subversive activity in the Ogadan, and [we] are agreeable to continuing those discussions now, even as Somalia has stationed a portion of its regular troops on the territory of Ethiopia. Together with this, the PMAC will not grant territorial concessions to Somalia, although this is because in such a case the present Ethiopian government will fall. Already at this time, Mengistu noted in this connection, there is talk among the people, and even in right-wing circles, to the effect that the PMAC is not up to the task of defending either Ethiopia or the Ogadan, and that it should therefore be deposed. Berhanu Bayeh, Mengistu continued, has been summoned to Addis Ababa for consultation, and afterward he will return to Moscow without delay, inasmuch as the PMAC has engaged and continues to engage in friendly negotiations with the Somalis over questions relating to the establishment of multi-faceted Ethiopian-Somali cooperation. Mengistu promised to consider the form (for example, his interview with the Ethiopian news agency) for additional presentations of the PMAC program for peaceful resolution of Ethiopian-Somali disagreements, as well as the Eritrean problem.

The Soviet Ambassador directed Mengistu's attention to the anti-socialist and even anti-Soviet (Maoist) propaganda which is being disseminating by certain private

publishing houses.

Mengistu declared that implementation of the program of propaganda of Marxist-Leninist ideas has indeed been unsatisfactory. For this reason, the PMAC has reorganized the Provisional Bureau of Mass Organization Affairs [POMOA] and replaced its leadership.

Concerning the Chinese, Mengistu noted that they are not only disseminating literature, but are rendering direct support to Eritrean separatists and extremists.

In the course of the discussion, a number of questions were touched upon in connection with the structure of the Ethiopian armed forces.

In conclusion, Mengistu stated as follows: "We are attentive to the advice of our Soviet comrades in connection with the search for political solutions to both domestic and foreign problems. We will continue to strive for this in the future, and have already been required to execute many persons or place them in prison. At the present time I, for example, am restraining those who are proposing repressive measures, including those against errant organizations who proclaim their adherence to Marxism-Leninism but who are struggling against the PMAC. The main goal at the present time is to create a political party and a new worker-peasant army, inasmuch as the old army has displayed its weakness, and it turns out that in military terms the counter-revolution is stronger than the PMAC had supposed."

For his part, the Soviet Ambassador again laid emphasis on the need to preserve, no matter what, contacts with the leadership of the SDR.

The Soviet Ambassador additionally directed Mengistu's attention to the fact that the representations in his letter to Comrade Brezhnev concerning the supposed inadequacies of military supplies did not correspond to reality.

Mengistu responded to that by stating that, evidently, the translation of those remarks was inexact, inasmuch as he had in mind not the inadequacy of supplies of one or another sort of weapon, but rather a request to augment them with supplies of a different technical sort, in particular, that the supply of tanks be augmented with supplies of trailers for their transport from port, conveyance to their place of destination, etc.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR TO
SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ RATANOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 113-116; translated by Bruce McDonald.]

**Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo
Meeting, 4 August 1977 (excerpt)**

Top Secret
Single copy
Minutes

MEETING OF THE
CC CPSU POLITBURO

4 August 1977

Chaired by: Com. KIRILENKO, A.P.

Attended: Comrades Y.V. Andropov, F.D. Kulakov, K.T. Mazurov, A.Y. Pel'she, P.N. Demichev, B.N. Ponomarev, M.S. Solomentsev, M.V. Zimianin, Y.P. Ryabov, K.V. Rusakov.

8. About the address to the leadership of the progressive African states in relation to the sharpening of Somali-Ethiopian relations.

KUZNETSOV reports that the Ethiopians have sent a complaint to the Organization for African Unity, and that our address to the leadership of the progressive African states with an appeal to take steps toward the normalization of Somali-Ethiopian relations would be very timely.

PONOMAREV supports Kuznetsov's proposal.

KIRILENKO: The situation which we have here with these two countries is extremely complicated. We have no reasons to quarrel with either the Somali side or the Ethiopian side, but we have only limited capabilities to influence their mutual relations. We need to make a decision.

[Source: *APRF*, f. 3, op. 120, d. 37, ll. 44, 48; translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

**Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P.
Ratanov, Memorandum of Conversation
with Mengistu, 5 August 1977**

SECRET, copy No. 2
From the journal of "11" August 1977

Ratanov, A.P.

Issue No. 284

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with Chairman of the PMAC of Ethiopia
MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM
5 August 1977

I visited Mengistu at his invitation (Berhanu Bayeh, a member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC, also took part in the conversation).

After thanking the Soviet Union for rendering assistance to Ethiopia, including the decision about the delivery of trailers, helicopters, and vehicles, Mengistu asked me to convey the following to the Soviet leadership and to comrade Brezhnev in particular:

The PMAC has attentively studied the advice in comrade L.I. Brezhnev's reply, and will follow it, in particular: to aim for the political resolution of Ethiopian-Somali differences. On August 8, Berhanu Bayeh, as well as governmental advisers Mikael Imru and Getachew Kibret, will fly to Moscow to continue negotiations with the Somali delegation.

Despite this, Mengistu continued, Somalia is continuing its escalation of military actions against Ethiopia. At present it is conducting systematic bombing raids on cities in the Ogaden (Dollo - on the border with Kenya), and the PMAC is anticipating that Harar, Dire-Dawa, etc. will be bombed. As a consequence of these bombing raids, industrial and agricultural firms and infrastructure are being destroyed. Thus far Ethiopian air forces have limited their bombing raids to Somali tanks and artillery, and air battles with Somali planes, and has refrained from bombing Somali cities because this would create a major military conflagration in this region. We do not intend to attack Somalia, Mengistu emphasized.

In connection with his statement, Mengistu requested that the Soviet government consider taking additional measures to influence Somalia, even some type of economic sanctions, and at the same time convey to the Somali government that Ethiopia is prepared to hold talks with Somalia with the participation of the Soviet Union. What is important now is to bring about a halt in Somali air attacks because these attacks demoralize the army as well as the peaceful population and could cause a political crisis in the regime.

In conclusion Mengistu requested that he be kept informed of possible steps that the Soviet Union would take.

During the course of the negotiations, the Soviet ambassador informed Mengistu about the decision of the Soviet government to deliver trailers for the transport of tanks, helicopters, and vehicles, from the port of entry to their destinations.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
(signature) /A. RATANOV/

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 127-128; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov, Memorandum of Conversation with Mengistu, 7 August 1977

From the journal of
A. P. RATANOV

TOP SECRET
Copy no. 2
16 August 1977
re: no. 292

Record of Conversation
with the Head of the PMAC
MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM
7 August 1977

I visited Mengistu Haile Mariam (Legesse Asfaw, member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC, also took part in the conversation).

1. In accordance with my instructions from the Center [Moscow], I informed Mengistu about the measures taken by the Soviet leadership in support of Ethiopia.

Mengistu requested that I convey his deep gratitude to the Soviet leadership and personally to L.I. Brezhnev for the information about these measures. We deeply trust the Soviet Union, he said, and are relying on its future support, since the situation in the border regions of Ethiopia is becoming more and more complicated. Somalia continues daily to bomb the cities of Dolo and Barre [sic]. There are Somali troops in the western Ogaden and we are now observing the movement of Somali units into the northern part of this region. Ethiopian troops have seized arms which appear to be NATO arms. According to certain, as yet unverified information, the

French have begun use their aircraft to deliver French arms to Mogadishu. The Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, under the cover of Eritrean separatist organizations, are transferring their detachments and arms into Eritrea. Sudan is supplying the separatists with American arms as well as arms they have recently received from the People's Republic of China.

Our struggle, Mengistu underscored, has the nature of a class struggle, and we are doing all we can to defend the revolution and to bring it to a victorious conclusion. At the same time, taking into account that the Ethiopian revolution is just a part of the larger revolutionary struggle, Mengistu continued, I feel a need to continue the consultations with Comrade L.I. Brezhnev which began in May of this year. I likewise appealed, he noted at the same time, with a letter to Comrades Fidel Castro and Erich Honecker in which I proposed that I meet with them in Berlin in the hope that together we might travel to Moscow to meet with Comrade L.I. Brezhnev in order to discuss in greater detail the situation in the interior and exterior of Ethiopia.

Mengistu did not answer the question of the Soviet Ambassador as to whether the current situation would allow him to leave the country. He confined himself to the remark that the old machinery of State required replacement[;] however, the PMAC was currently not yet in a position to do this due to the lack of revolutionary cadres, etc....

In the course of further conversation Mengistu asked [us] to examine the possibility of offering assistance likewise in fortifying the region of the Red Sea coast (supplying coastal batteries).

Mengistu likewise spoke out in favor of sending a Soviet military delegation to Ethiopia in the immediate future in order to strengthen contacts between the armed forces of the two countries in accordance with the previously approved plan of exchanges in the area of the military. In his opinion, an Ethiopian military delegation might visit the Soviet Union with the goal of familiarizing themselves later, when the military situation had been stabilized.

2. [I] carried out my instructions regarding the question of the Soviet-Ethiopian negotiations on opening a direct sea route between the ports of the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

Mengistu spoke in favor of the open-

ing of such a route and of concluding an agreement on this issue as well as on the issue of an intergovernmental agreement on shipping.

3. [I] carried out my instructions regarding the question of the Republic of South Africa's impending nuclear arms testing. Mengistu welcomed the Soviet Government initiative on this issue (TASS announcement). At the same time he remarked that at the last OAU [meeting], Ethiopia had proposed to include on the agenda for the Assembly the issue of the threat of the creation of a nuclear arsenal in the Republic of South Africa with the assistance of Western powers; however, the bloc of the so-called Francophone countries rejected the Ethiopian proposal. At the current time, said Mengistu, it is imperative that the socialist and progressive African countries develop a campaign to prevent the fortification of the military power of the Republic of South Africa which threatens all of Africa.

In conclusion, Mengistu requested once again that we convey his gratitude to the Soviet leadership and to Comrade L.I. Brezhnev.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ A.RATANOV/

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 102-104.]

**Ethiopian Aide-Memoire to Soviet
Officials in Moscow, 11 August 1977**

Delivered by the Ethiopian
delegation to the Soviet
delegation at the reception
on 11 August 1977

Translated from English

AIDE-MEMOIRE

1. During the course of discussions between comrades Mengistu Haile Mariam and Nikolai Podgorny in April 1977 in Moscow, the Soviet Union first came up with the idea for a joint meeting of the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia in an effort to diminish the possibility of conflict and create the preconditions which could lead to harmonious cooperation between the two states.

2. In mid-July 1977 the provisional

military government of socialist Ethiopia received a communication from the Soviet ambassador in Addis-Ababa that the meeting would take place in Moscow on an expert level from 26-28 July 1977. The same communication noted that prior to and during the course of the meeting both Ethiopia and Somalia should refrain from any steps that would complicate matters. Ethiopia also received assurances that Somalia would not begin military actions.

3. On 23 July 1977, three days before the beginning of the Moscow meeting, Somalia began open and direct aggressive action against Ethiopia, thereby repudiating those very conditions necessary for the success of the meeting.

4. The Ethiopian delegation, headed by Major Berhanu Bayeh, of the permanent committee of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, came to Moscow at the appointed time to explain to the Soviet government that the situation that had arisen at that time as a consequence of Somalia's actions involved a range of factors which would have a negative impact on the proposed meeting, and, accordingly, that there was no practical purpose in holding such a meeting.

5. The Ethiopian delegation noted its surprise at the fact that Somalia insisted on discussing what it called the "territorial question." Ethiopia has no territorial dispute with Somalia; moreover, Ethiopia considers it inappropriate to hold talks under duress.

6. The working document that the Soviet Union presented to the Ethiopian delegation was studied attentively and delivered to Addis-Ababa. It was also taken into account that the situation which led to aggressive actions by Somali had not changed. The OAU's offer of its good offices to Ethiopia and Somalia at the Committee session from 5-8 August 1977 in Libreville, Gabon, is very significant; at the session a series of recommendations were passed, which resolved the following:

"1) Affirms resolution 16(1) and resolutions 27(2), obligating member-states, in accordance with the OAU charter, to respect the borders existing at the time of independence, and also to respect the basic principles of the inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member-states.

2) Calls on the sides of the conflict,

Ethiopia and Somalia, in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Charter, to cease all military actions.

3) Affirms the non-agreement of the OAU with intervention by any foreign powers, and, in particular, by non-African powers, in the internal affairs of member-states of the OAU; calls for the rejection of any non-sanctioned intervention in accordance with the decision of the XIV assembly of the heads of states and governments.

4) Calls upon all states to refrain from any actions which could be detrimental to the achievement of understanding between the sides in the conflict, increase tension and conflict, and threaten the peace, security, and territorial integrity of the two neighboring states.

5) Recommends in connection with the serious proposal by the executive organs of the president of the Committee of the OAU to offer its good offices to enter into contact with the heads of state of Ethiopia and Somalia in an effort to achieve a cease-fire and create a situation that would be conducive to the peaceful resolution of the problem."

7. Taking the aforementioned into account, it was decided that the Ethiopian delegation should take part in the Moscow discussions on the basis of the recommendations of the OAU, made in Libreville, and the Soviet working document consisting of the following ideas about the first steps necessary for the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia:

1) The two sides should refrain from the use of force to resolve their disputes. Measures should be taken to end military and other hostile actions.

2) The two sides should take steps to preserve peace and security on their borders.

3) They should refrain from hostile propaganda in the mass media against one another and stimulate efforts which would lead to the development of friendly relations.

4) The two sides should recognize the fact that continued tension between Somalia and Ethiopia is not in the interest of their peoples, and presents an obstacle to their combining forces in

the struggle against the common enemy - imperialism.

5) The two sides should agree to the establishment and maintenance of contacts between them on various levels in the interests of achieving the stated goals.

It would be desirable to maintain the order of the points, as they were written in the working document.

8. The Ethiopian delegation hopes that agreement to the aforementioned will lead to a cessation of military actions as well as to the liquidation of the consequences of aggression in the context and spirit of the corresponding decisions of the OAU.

Translated by S. Berezkhov (signature)

Original No. 2290/GS

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1635, ll. 55-57; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**CC CPSU Politburo transcript,
11 August 1977 (excerpt)**

Top Secret
Single Copy
Minutes

MEETING OF THE
CC CPSU POLITBURO
11 August 1977

Chaired by: Comrade KIRILENKO, A.P.

Attended: Comrades Y.V. Andropov, F.D. Kulakov, K.T. Mazurov, A.Y. Pel'she, P.N. Demichev, M.S. Solomentsev, I.V. Kapitonov, M.V. Zimianin, Y.P. Riabov, K.V. Rusakov.

[...]11. On additional measures for normalization of the situation in the Horn of Africa and on assistance and support for the leadership of Ethiopia. (The issue was presented by comrades Andropov, Kuznetsov, Sokolov).

KIRILENKO: Leonid Ilych [Brezhnev] requested that the Ethiopian appeal be considered as soon as possible, and to do everything possible to give them the necessary assistance. He entrusted Comrades Gromyko, Ustinov, and Andropov to prepare proposals. The Comrades have ful-

filled the assignment.

MAZUROV, ANDROPOV, PELSHE emphasize the importance of the proposed measures for assistance to Ethiopia.

The resolution was adopted.

[Source: *APRF*, f. 3, op. 120, d. 37, ll. 51, 56; translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

**Record of Soviet-Somali Talks, Moscow,
12 August 1977 (excerpts), with Somali
aide-memoire, 10 August 1977**

From the journal of Secret. Copy no. 8
L.F. Ilichev 26 August 1977
No. 2289/GS

Record of a Conversation
with the Minister of Mineral and Water
Resources of Somalia,
Head of Delegation of Experts
HUSSEIN ABDULKADIR KASIM
(second level)

The head of the [Somali] delegation returned to Moscow from Mogadishu on 7 August 1977. Meetings took place at the residence of the Somali Delegation from 8-12 August 1977. On 13 August the head of the delegation returned to Mogadishu.

12 August

[H.A. Kasim stated:] [...]As regards the position of the Soviet delegation, it has become clearly defined for us in the course of the conversations which have taken place. We have noted your reaction to the Somali point of view concerning the Soviet working document.

We would like, in the spirit of comradeship, H.A. Kasim added, to express our deep thanks to the Soviet side for the enormous efforts which it has made in the search for a common platform at the Somali-Ethiopian meeting. Our delegation fully shares the view that the Soviet mission of good services is continuing. However, given the current situation the Somali delegation considers it imperative to return to Mogadishu to report on the situation, which has taken shape during the negotiations to the CC SRSP and to the government of Somalia.

[I] underscored that the Soviet Union intends to continue its good services mission. I thanked my interlocutor for his high estimation of the efforts of the USSR in the

search for a mutually acceptable resolution, directed at the normalization of Somali-Ethiopian relations.

At the same time, I ascertained, as a result of the separate meetings and conversations which had taken place with the Somali and the Ethiopian delegations, that both parties still maintained uncompromising and virtually mutually exclusive positions.

Nonetheless, the Soviet delegation considers, as before, that in the development of events nothing has happened which would make unrealizable the execution of the Soviet working document. This document remains valid and in fact acquires even more significance, insofar as the escalation of military actions continues. It goes without saying that the Soviet side is aware of the difficulties which have arisen and understands the approach of each of the delegations in their consideration of the current issues. But it would obviously be hasty to come to conclusions of any sort which would "slam the door." On the contrary, the door is open to the search for a rational solution to the questions which stand between the two countries, with both of whom the Soviet Union has friendly relations.

I expressed my gratitude to my interlocutor and to the members of the Somali delegation for their cooperation with the Soviet side. The discussions which took place were characterized by candor, as befits discussions between friends. I also expressed the hope that, after their consultations with their leadership, the Somali delegation would once again return to Moscow in order to continue this exchange of opinions.

In conclusion, I inquired as to when the Somali delegation intended to return to Mogadishu.

H. A. Kasim responded, that the delegation would depart on the Aeroflot flight on Sunday, August 13.

Having expressed his thanks for the hospitality which was accorded to the Somali representatives in Moscow, H. A. Kasim requested that we continue our discussion privately.

In a tete-a-tete conversation, H. A. Kasim said the following.

First: The Somali delegation had received an alarming communication about certain schemes concerning Ethiopia. As is well known, Somalia values the fact that Ethiopia maintains friendly relations with

the Soviet Union and that Ethiopia has proclaimed the principles of socialist orientation. In spite of the fact that Somali disagrees with Ethiopia's evaluation of these principles and that, in the Somali view, Ethiopia has not yet found the path of genuine anti-imperialism, nonetheless, one may hope that the steps which Ethiopia has taken at the present time will lead to constructive results.

Although the available information presents a picture which is far from complete, it is considered in Mogadishu that Ethiopia could "slip through our fingers" and go over to the other camp. It would be shameful for history if, at the very moment when efforts are being undertaken to organize negotiations between Somali and Ethiopia concerning significant issues, Ethiopia should return to the camp of its traditional allies in the West.

[My] Interlocutor said that as the Soviet side knows, Somalia hopes to create a strong government in East Africa, which would unite Ethiopia and Somalis on a socialist basis. This hope is expressed not with the intention of tossing about catchwords, but on the strength of the fact that these two countries are close in terms of ethnicity, geography, and, Somalia hopes as before, ideologically. If the creation of such a united government should be successful, it would represent a force and a buttress which is imperative for the socialist development of East Africa.

This is why in Somalia we are concerned by such communications and consider it imperative to bring them to the attention of the Soviet side.

Second: Ethiopia has come forward with rather resolute declarations in the press and on the radio to the effect that Ethiopia intends to teach Somalia a lesson which Somalia will never forget, and also to the effect that Ethiopia intends to lead an open war against Somalia, having received in the meantime, assistance from socialist countries, including, among others, the Soviet Union. The Somali delegation would like to ask the Soviet representatives, in their capacity as friends, if there is a measure of truth in this. The Somali side considers that a force is at work in Ethiopia, if not in government circles, then in other sorts of circles in Addis Ababa, which is creating a war hysteria. That is why the delegation considers it imperative to inform the Soviet side about

this.

[I] expressed thanks for the information. I noted that the initial communication of the Somali delegation was of an excessively general nature. The schemes of imperialist and reactionary Arab circles and their intentions are generally well known. Imperialism and reactionism intend to strike a blow not only at Ethiopia, but also at Somalia. They are not happy with the socialist course which has been proclaimed in both of these countries. Naturally, it is imperative to be vigilant.

The situation, which has developed in the relations between Somalia and Ethiopia, in the view of the Soviet side, is favorable to the realization of the goals of imperialism and reactionism. The path down which Somalia has started with the aim of creating, in your words, a "socialist monolith" in East Africa, is likely to undermine the goals you have placed before yourself. We are aware of the fact that in Ethiopia there are reactionary forces, that there is an internal counter-revolution, that there is a struggle going on in Ethiopia.

However, according to our information, the core leadership of Ethiopia is taking a progressive course. Here, unfortunately, we disagree with you in our evaluation.

As is well known, in a discussion with the Soviet ambassador, Siad Barre declared that the Somali government did not oppose the granting of assistance to Ethiopia by the Soviet Union within the framework of the agreement which exists between the two countries. We offer assistance to Ethiopia, just as we offered assistance to Somalia, but, as you are aware, this assistance is intended to serve the aim of defense, not aggression.

[I] said that I had not happened to see in the press declarations of the Ethiopian leadership to the effect that they intend to "teach Somalia a lesson." It is possible, that this matter is the work of the mass media. Unfortunately, the mass media in both countries has strayed too far in their mutual accusations. Therefore the Soviet Union has appealed not to give free rein to emotions, but rather to act with reason, proceeding not from national interests, but rather from international interests, from the interests of strengthening the position of progressive forces. A dangerous situation has now been created and if it is not gotten under control it may develop into a serious conflict, the

irreversibility of which would be fraught with serious consequences.

Therefore the Soviet leaders, as friends, advise your leaders to weigh all of the circumstances and to approach this matter from a broad public and international position. The Soviet Union hopes to avoid a conflict in the relations of two countries, with both of whom it has friendly relations. The most important task now is to stop the escalation of tension, to put an end to the bloodshed. It appears to us that there is no other basis for a settlement now than that one which was proposed by the Soviet side in the working document, which the Ethiopian side has accepted and which, unfortunately, the Somali side has refused to accept.

Up to this point the course of negotiations, as it appears to us, does not satisfy your two delegations, but the Soviet side is also not satisfied, although the Soviet side is taking all possible steps. Nonetheless, we consider it imperative to continue our efforts toward reaching a turning-point in the events which would be satisfactory to the interests of the forces of progress and socialism.

H.A. Kasim noted that Siad Barre, in a conversation with the Soviet ambassador, had indeed said that Somalia did not object to assistance, including military assistance, offered by the Soviet Union to Ethiopia. However, he also spoke of the necessity of maintaining proportions. My interlocutor declared that he would like to express his candid hope that the Soviet Union would approach with understanding the issue that, until the time has arrived when the question of the part of Somali territory has been resolved, the Somali revolution will be in danger. Moreover, this danger does not come from within, but rather from the very part of the Somali territory which is now under Ethiopian rule. A similar danger is caused by the enormous efforts to achieve national liberation made by Somalis, who are living on territory which does not form a part of Somalia. In order for Somalia to contribute to the building of socialism all over the world, all of the Somali nation must stand firmly on its legs.

At the meeting of Siad Barre with the former president of the PMAC of Ethiopia Tefere Bante, it was proposed that the latter should become the leader of a federation of Somalia and Ethiopia in order that this might resolve the national question. However,

Ethiopia responded negatively to this proposition and, as a result, the situation which has been created in Western Somalia is already getting out of control. H.A. Kasim expressed the hope that the Soviet side fully understands the meaning of these words.

[I] declared that I could only repeat what I had already said and that I hoped that its meaning was correctly understood by the Somali side. I added, that it is necessary to realize all of the responsibility which will lie on Somalia, if there is no cessation of military actions.

The following people were present at the discussions: on the Soviet side was the head of the DPO of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, O. N. Khlestov; the head of the Third African Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, V. A. Ustinov; on the Somali side was member of the CC SRSP, Director of the Somali Development Bank, Jama Mohammad; member of the CC SRSP, Head of the Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of the CC SRSP Ahmed Mohammed Duale, the Ambassador of the Somali Democratic Republic to the USSR, Ali Ismail Warsma, the Military Attache of the Somali Democratic Republic to the USSR Salah Hadji.

The discussions were translated by the Third Secretary of the Translation Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, S. V. Berezhkov, and transcribed by the Third Secretary of the Third African Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, R. A. Ibragimov.

Deputy Minister
USSR Foreign Affairs
(signed and typed) L. Ilichev

[attachment]

Delivered by the Somali
delegation to the Soviet
delegation at the meeting of
10 August 1977*

Translated from English [into Russian]

Taking into account the fact that the Somali government has appealed to the government of the USSR to offer its good services toward the resolution of the territorial dispute between Somali and Ethiopia with the objective of reaching a fair, peaceful, and stable resolution of this territorial dispute;

Likewise taking into account the concurrence of the USSR in carrying out its international socialist obligations to undertake a similar mission of good services after receiving the full concurrence of the governments of Somalia and Ethiopia;

Taking into consideration that the government of the Somali Democratic Republic has empowered this high level delegation to represent itself in discussions and negotiations on the aforementioned question;

Taking into consideration likewise, the exchange of opinions between the Soviet and the Somali sides in the course of the last week of July and 8 August 1977;

Responding to the appeal of the Soviet representative, made to the Somali delegation on 8 August 1977 to present a working document which might serve as the basis for discussions;

Recognizing the fact that the colonialization by Ethiopia of a significant portion of Somali territory and its population represents the sole reason for the tension which has been created at the current moment in the Horn of Africa and that such tension without any doubt is not consistent with the interests of the people of the given region, but rather only serves the interests of their common enemy, international imperialism and neocolonialism;

Being firmly convinced that the primary cause of the lengthy dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia is the continuing colonialization and military occupation by Ethiopia of a significant portion of Somali territory and its population and that the decolonization of this territory takes absolute priority over all other questions;

Taking into consideration the fact that a discussion of the consequences of the colonial occupation, which is being carried out at the present time by Ethiopia, without a discussion of the central question of decolonization makes it impossible and futile to conduct constructive negotiations;

Proceeding from the Leninist principle of the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination, human dignity, liberty and national sovereignty, a principle which is clearly fixed in the United Nations Charter and which was subsequently reflected in Resolution 1514 of the UN General Assembly, and likewise from the fact that any policy of Ethiopia, which is directed at the perpetuation of colonial rule over the aforementioned Somali territory and its popula-

tion, is in clear contradiction to this noble principle;

The Somali delegation proposes the following in the capacity of a basis for discussion:

“The decolonization of the Somali territory and its population, which finds itself under Ethiopian rule.”

* When the head of the Somali delegation delivered the document, he called it a working message, laying out the views of the delegation regarding the principal question.-S.B.

Translated by S. Berezhkov

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1620, ll. 32-59; translated by Sally Kux.]

Record of Negotiations between Somali and Soviet Officials in Moscow, 15-19 August 1977 (excerpts)

From the journal of Secret. Copy No. 8
L.F. Ilichev 31 August 1977
No. 2325/GS

Record of Conversation
with the Minister of Mineral and Water
Resources of Somalia,
Head of Delegation of Experts
Hussein Abdulkadir Kasim
(third level)

The head of the Somali delegation of experts returned to Moscow on 14 August 1977. Meetings took place at the residence of the Somali Delegation from 15-19 August 1977. On 20 August the delegation returned to Mogadishu.

15 August

[...] Moreover, in confidence it had been said to the head of the Somali delegation, that the Soviet leaders and L.I. Brezhnev in person had appealed once again with a message to President Siad, in which was expressed the point of view of the Soviet side with regard to the events, which were taking place in the region of the Horn of Africa. This had been done before the publication of the TASS statement.

[...]

17 August

[...] [I] underscored that the Soviet good services mission, as follows from the exchange of messages between L.I. Brezhnev and Siad Barre, is not charged with facilitating the discussion of any particular concrete question or questions which have arisen in relations between Somalia and Ethiopia, such as, for example, the territorial question, for the parties which are in conflict are more familiar with the substance of the matter. In the current situation it is difficult to imagine how it will be possible to resolve any sort of concrete question. After all, in order for that to happen it is necessary to create the appropriate conditions. Therefore the Soviet side sees its good services mission first and foremost in assisting in the creation of conditions, under which it would be possible to resolve all questions at the negotiating table.

18 August

A tete-a-tete conversation took place at the request of the head of the Somali delegation.

H.A. Kasim reported that:

1. He was charged by the Somali government to inform the Soviet government that new factors had arisen in the development of the situation in East Africa, which bear witness to the attempts to expand internationally and to escalate the conflict and also to the interference of non-African governments in the conflict. Several days before President Siad in his declaration had spoken of the interference of a friendly country, part of the socialist community, whose leaders and policy enjoy great authority in Somalia. According to information received by Mogadishu, Cuban military officials are involved in the conflict between the Western Somali Liberation Front and Ethiopia. As President Siad declared further, Somalia does not intend to remain neutral in the face of this situation, when citizens of Somali nationality in the Ogaden are perishing at the hands of non-Africans.

2. He discussed the campaign of insinuations which was being carried out in the imperialist press and declared that Somalia will not become the victim of such a campaign, that, as before, Somalia will adhere to socialist principles and to the course of strengthening friendly relations with the Soviet Union, in spite of the ruses of impe-

rialist propaganda.

At the same time he expressed alarm at the "avalanche of declarations and commentary appearing in the Soviet press," beginning on 14 August, noting, that such declarations are pouring oil on the fire of imperialist propaganda at the very moment when the Soviet Union is conducting a good services mission, whose aim is to assist in finding a solution to the situation which has been created in East Africa. Such reports hardly further the fulfillment of the good services mission and they could not have been printed without the consent of the Soviet government. In his words, the campaign in the Soviet press does not promote the creation of a situation which would be favorable to reaching a peaceful resolution of the questions which have arisen between Somalia and Ethiopia. If this campaign does not cease, said my interlocutor, the Somali people will begin to ask why statements in the Soviet press contain accusations addressed at Somalia and why the Somali government does not react to them.

He assured me further, that Somalia would not be deceived by any such ruses of imperialist propaganda, but warned that others might swallow the bait.

[I] asked about the degree of trustworthiness of the intelligence which served as the basis for the declaration that, "Cuban military officials were involved in the military conflict." Is it possible that you are swallowing the bait of imperialist propaganda? Moreover, would it not be preferable to clarify this sort of question directly with our Cuban comrades?

H.A. Kasim. We are not speaking idly. Contacts have already been established with the Cubans as regards this question.

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1620, ll. 60-80; translated by Sally Kux.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov
and Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia
Jose Perez Novoa, 23 August 1977**

SECRET, Copy No. 2

From the journal of 6 September 1977
Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 324

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
with the Cuban ambassador to Ethiopia
JOSE PEREZ NOVOA

23 August 1977

During the course of the conversation, which took place at the Soviet Embassy, Jose Perez Novoa, on his own initiative, opened the conversation with a question about sending Cuban military personnel to Ethiopia in accordance with Mengistu's request. After this he asked the following: "You had directed attention to the inappropriateness of the announcement by the leader of the Cuban military specialists in Ethiopia, Arnoldo Ochoa [to the effect that] 'you were right that the decision to send Cuban personnel to Ethiopia does not depend on Havana, but on Moscow.' This was the case, as the Cuban ambassador to Addis Ababa found out. Raul Castro, in the course of his recent consultations with Soviet leaders in Moscow, did not raise the issue of the possibility of sending Cuban military personnel to Ethiopia, and, consequently, A. Ochoa did not have any basis to make the aforementioned statement to Mengistu. We decided to tell you this because we would like our relations with Soviet comrades to be open and clear."

I thanked Jose Perez Novoa. Concerning the essence of the matter, I noted that the question of inviting Cuban military personnel is a difficult one not just for socialist states, but also for the leadership of the PMAC, in that the invitation of combat units from foreign powers, particularly non-African ones, could be used by Somalia and the Eritrean separatists to involve military personnel from the Arab states in military actions at much greater levels than is occurring now.

Jose Perez Novoa did not try to dispute the Soviet ambassador's statements. This time he also did not dispute the Soviet ambassador's statements about the necessity of working with the Ethiopian leadership to continue the Somali-Ethiopian negotiations in Moscow on an expert level.

In the course of the conversation Jose Perez Novoa assured that [he would convey] to all Cuban diplomats and specialists the instructions given to him about the necessity of clarifying the decisive importance of the assistance rendered by the Soviet Union to defend the revolutionary achievements of the Ethiopian people and the territorial integrity of the country.

USSR AMBASSADOR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

(signature) /A. Ratanov/

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, ll. 118-119; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

Memorandum of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov with U.S. Charge d'Affaires A. Tienkin, 3 September 1977

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2
From the journal of 6 September 1977
Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 339

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
with USA charge d'affaires in Ethiopia
A[RTHUR] TIENKIN
3 September 1977

By previous agreement I met with A. Tienkin at the Soviet Embassy. During the discussion he made the following comments.

- American-Ethiopian relations. They are not as good as they could be. Nonetheless, there have been some signs of improvement in these relations recently, [which is] what the USA has been seeking. For example, the other day the USA announced its readiness to continue economic aid to Ethiopia. We raised the issue of maintaining staff at the embassy in Addis-Ababa, above all staff in the economic and trade sections (the PMAC, as is well-known, in May of this year liquidated a group of American military attaches and a military adviser, and demanded that the embassy staff be reduced by one half). This time, it seems to Tienkin, the Ethiopian government will be inclined to satisfy the American request.

The USA informed the Ethiopian government that it does not and would not interfere in the domestic affairs of Ethiopia, including in Eritrea. At the same time, said Tienkin, given Ethiopia's current socialist policy, the USA is not convinced that it (Ethiopia) is able to maintain normal relations with capitalist countries.

- In the American view, the PMAC "is going too fast" on questions of social transformation, and in Ethiopia there are forces which would like to go even faster than the PMAC along the path of turning Ethiopia into a socialist state. In particular, the greater radicalism of the leadership of the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement [MEISON], as Tienkin suggests, was a reason for the "dis-

appearance" of that leadership, in comparison with the PMAC.

- Of all of Ethiopia's domestic problems, the most difficult is Eritrea; in comparison with this even the problem of the liberation of the Ogaden seems easy.

- Ethiopia, of course, will not be dismembered and will secure its border with Somalia, however, he (Tienkin) did not see any possibility for the normalization of Ethiopian-Somali differences, insofar as Somalia is unlikely to renounce its territorial pretensions to Ethiopia.

- American-Somali relations. They are improving. The USA even "agreed in principle" to the delivery of defensive weapons. The USA announced, however, that these deliveries cannot take place at present because of the military actions in the Ogaden. The USA also emphasized that their agreement to military deliveries does not mean that they do not recognize the territorial integrity of Somalia.

- Tienkin is aware of the rumours that Israel is supposedly rendering military aid to Ethiopia, but he did not see any clear indications that would confirm these rumors. However, even if Israel were doing something like this, said Tienkin, it would be doing this on its own initiative, i.e. without consultation with the USA on such questions.

For his part the Soviet ambassador emphasized that the Soviet Union supports Ethiopia, but at the same time aims to convince Somalia and Ethiopia of the need to seek peaceful regulation of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict and that the Soviet Union considers Ethiopia to be a non-aligned state, having the right, as all other states do, to have normal relations with socialist states as well as with the Western states. He added that the support of the Soviet Union for Ethiopia's socialist orientation is defined by the fact that it [this policy] was chosen by Ethiopia itself and answers to the needs of its socio-economic development. However, this policy of socialist orientation presupposes normal economic and trade ties with all countries, the existence of a private sector, mixed state-private firms, etc.

Tienkin remarked that he agreed with this, that the Ethiopians themselves chose the path of socialist orientation. In Tienkin's view, the Ethiopian leaders have really begun to emphasize their non-aligned course more than they had in previous statements.

During the discussion, Tienkin did not try to reproach the Soviet Union and did not even show any interest in Soviet military aid to Ethiopia. He was most interested in the issue of Soviet-Somali relations (the results of Siad Barre's trip to Moscow, etc...)

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR TO
SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA /s/ A. Ratanov

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, ll. 136-138; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov and Mengistu, 5 September 1977

From diary of SECRET
A. P. Ratanov Copy No. 2
6 September 1977

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
with Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia
HAILE MARIAMOM MENGISTU
5 September 1977

I received a visit from Haile Mariam Mengistu (Berhanu Bayeh, a member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC, took part in the discussion) and, pursuant to instructions, informed him about the results of the visit of President Siad Barre of the SDR to Moscow.

1. Having listened, Mengistu asked to convey his appreciation to the Soviet leadership, and personally to Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, for the correct line followed in discussions with Siad Barre, and for the comprehensive assistance rendered to Ethiopia. In this connection, Mengistu noted that at the present time, especially in regard to Soviet supplies of trailers for the transport of tanks, the balance of forces between Ethiopia and Somali was beginning to move in favor of Ethiopia.

Assessing the demarche of Siad Barre as a political maneuver (departing for Moscow, Siad Barre issued an order for an attack on Jijiga), Mengistu announced that an essential condition for Ethiopian-Somali negotiations would be the complete withdrawal of Somali forces from Ethiopian territory. Siad Barre is now attempting to lead astray not only the Soviet Union, but also the PDRY, the intermediation of which he had only recently requested, as well as Madagascar. However, said Mengistu, al-

though the Soviet comrades and comrades from PDRY are taking a principled line in the Somali-Ethiopian conflict, friends in the Republic of Madagascar do not understand everything in the conflict and are inclined to believe the demagogic pronouncements of Siad Barre.

2. Mengistu, who returned on 4 September from Jijiga, told about the battle outside that population center ("the most powerful tank forces in Africa"). On Somalia's side, four motorized mechanical brigades (5, 8, 9 and 10) took part in the fighting. After the Somali attack on Jijiga, which was repelled, Ethiopian forces counter-attacked and repelled the Somalis, completely destroying one tank battalion. The fighting in that region is continuing. It is possible, Mengistu noted in this connection, that Siad Barre counted on a victory outside of Jijiga for the purpose of forcing the Ethiopians into negotiations from a position of strength, and in the event of a defeat, to "demonstrate good will in the eyes of the Soviet Union."

3. Responding to a question from the Soviet Ambassador (a "good question"), Mengistu stated that up until recently the government of the Republic of Djibouti had taken an unfriendly position toward Ethiopia in respect to the Somali-Ethiopian conflict, by prohibiting the landing of Ethiopian aircraft in Djibouti, rendering medical assistance to wounded Somali soldiers, and so forth. Now, however, that the Republic of Djibouti is suffering a serious economic crisis as a result of Somali aggression and, in particular, now that Somali saboteurs stopped the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad from operating, its government has expressed a readiness to enter into a trade relationship with Ethiopia. Mengistu is certain that this positive development in the policy of the Government of the Republic of Djibouti will gain strength.

In Djibouti, Mengistu continued, at the present time there are three groups of political forces: (1) the party of the People's Independence Movement (Marxist-Leninist), advocating independence and creation of a progressive government; (2) the party of the National Union for Independence, advocating nationalist positions for independence; and (3) the right-wing party of the African People's League, advocating, in the final analysis, if not annexation to Somalia, then at least the establishment of special relations with it.

Ethiopia is supporting the People's Independence Movement and advising that party to unite with the National Union for Independence for the establishment of an independent existence for the Republic of Djibouti. The People's Independence Movement does not exclude the possibility that in the future that party will be required to resort to armed methods of conflict against the present government, which is persecuting it.

In the opinion of Mengistu, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries could, with the help of Ethiopia, if necessary, establish contact with the People's Independence Movement and render support to that party. Toward this end the Soviet Committee for Solidarity of the Countries of Asian and Africa could dispatch a delegation to Addis-Ababa or receive in Moscow a delegation of that party. It would be worthwhile to join forces for this purpose, Mengistu stated, in order to prevent the return of Djibouti to the imperialist bloc.

4. In response to related representations of the Soviet Ambassador, Mengistu announced his readiness to meet with the Soviet Chief Military Advisor and asked to be excused for the fact that, being occupied with the leadership of military operations, he had not been able to do this sooner.

5. As concerns the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement, Mengistu stated that the movement had now split into two groups, one of which was inclined toward cooperation with the PMAC. The PMAC will continue its advocacy of the merger of all Marxist-Leninist organizations and groups into a single party and of the creation of a national front.

6. Responding to a question of the Soviet Ambassador, Mengistu stated that the PMAC was preparing to reexamine the ranks of the All-Ethiopian Committee on Peace, Friendship and Solidarity. Subsequently the PMAC will inform the Embassy as to the manner in which it would be most productive for the Soviet Committee on Solidarity of the Countries of Asia and Africa to render cooperation to that Committee. In this connection, as relates to assistance which the Soviet Committee intends to render to Ethiopia, it would be possible to direct this assistance to the address of the Ethiopian Committee on Peace, Friendship and Solidarity, simultaneously apprising the PMAC about this.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

/s/ A. RATANOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 95-9; translated by Bruce McDonald.]

Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov, Memorandum of Meeting with Mengistu, 10 September 1977

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2

From the journal 29" September 1977
RATANOV, A.P. Issue No. 350

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with the Chairman of the PMAC
MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM
10 September 1977

On September 10, together with the heads of the diplomatic missions of Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, PDRY, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, PDRK [People's Democratic Republic of Korea; North Korea], Cuba, and Yugoslavia, I was invited to visit Mengistu Haile Mariam. From the Ethiopian side, Atnafu Abate and Berhanu Bayeh, Deputy Chairman of the PMAC and member of its Permanent Committee, respectively, took part in the meeting, along with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Felleke Gedle-Giorgis.

Mengistu said that the goal of this meeting was to inform the governments of the socialist countries and the PDRY, through their representatives in Addis-Ababa, about the discovery by the PMAC of an imperialist plot against the Ethiopian revolution, in which to some extent or another are participating the USA (the initiator of the plot), Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kenya, and Somalia.

According to the document, which fell into the hands of the PMAC "from trusted sources," CIA official E. Kelly from the USA Embassy in Nairobi has worked out a coordinated plan of action of domestic Ethiopian counterrevolutionary forces and the countries which support them, which envisages a range of acts at the end of September - beginning of October of this year, which have as their goal the overthrow of the PMAC and the creation of a pro-Western, reactionary government. Terrorist acts

in Addis-Ababa against members of the PMAC leadership and the organization of a combined attack of military formations prepared on the territories of Sudan and Kenya, and also a continuation of Somali aggression, are parts of the plan.

In this regard Mengistu Haile Mariam said that in the aforementioned document there are listed various types of military sub-units and their specific tasks are set forth. The attack would begin simultaneously from the north-west, west, and south in the direction of Addis-Ababa. In fact, as far as Somalia is concerned, its forces which are located on the territory of Ethiopia, on 10 September of this year again attacked Jijiga, in the event of the capture of which they are planning an attack on the administrative center of that region, Harar, and the great industrial center Direddawa. Battles for Jijiga are continuing.

Among the number of parties and organizations which are participating in the plot, Mengistu named the Eritrean separatist organization, the Ethiopian Democratic Union, [and] the Movement for the Liberation of the Afars (detachments of this movement would attack Assab).

In conclusion, having declared that the PMAC is taking measures now to explode the schemes of the participants in the plot, Mengistu expressed the hope that the socialist countries, whose assistance is decisive for Ethiopia, will provide it at this critical moment the necessary political and military support. In this regard he noted that one of the most serious problems for Ethiopia may be the problem of fuel, since the Arab countries intend to apply an embargo on deliveries of fuel to Ethiopia (which are realized through the company Mobil).

The heads of the diplomatic missions promised to bring the information which Mengistu had provided to the attention of their governments.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
IN SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ A. RATANOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 139-40; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

**Memorandum of Conversation between
Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P.
Ratanov and Ethiopian Foreign
Minister Felleke Gedle Giorgis,**

14 September 1977

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2
From the journal of 29 September 1977
Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 354

Memorandum of Conversation with the
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia,
FELLEKE GEDLE GIORGIS
14 September 1977

On 14 September of this year, the Soviet delegation taking part in the celebrations of the occasion of the third anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution (comrade Yezhov, I.M.) had a meeting with Felleke Gedle-Giorgis.

During the course of a detailed conversation, after expressing his deep recognition to the Soviet Union for its comprehensive support and assistance to Ethiopia, the minister made the following statements:

Considering the extremely difficult situation in Ethiopia, particularly in connection with the military intervention by Somalia, the Ethiopian government is taking and will take measures which will aim to strengthen cooperation with states that support Ethiopia, to receive support from conservative regimes, and even to divide those states, including Arab states, which are openly hostile to the Ethiopian revolution. As a long-term goal, Ethiopia will even aim to restore contacts with Syria, Iraq, Sudan, et al.

As a whole, the positions of the overwhelming majority of the member-states of the OAU are favorable to Ethiopia as far as maintaining its territorial integrity is concerned, although many African states are not reconciled to the Ethiopian revolution and its socialist orientation. The OAU and the Committee created to provide good offices for the resolution of the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict continue their efforts to end it and come out on the side of Ethiopia. However, Sudan blocks their activities.

The position of Sudan is very duplicitous now: on the one hand, Sudan actively supports Eritrean separatism, on the other hand, it fears that in case of some form of secession by Eritrea, this would create a dangerous precedent which could encourage separatism in southern Sudan. Therefore Sudan appears to vacillate and Ethiopia intends to use this. Under these conditions Egypt encourages intervention by

Sudan in Eritrean affairs and has sent 40,000 men to Sudan to exert influence on the Sudanese leadership and to show its (Egyptian) support in the event of the activation of the separatists in southern Sudan. This has enabled Sudan to send 4,000 of its own soldiers to Eritrea.

Ethiopia intends to activate its ties with the West European states, particularly with the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland, et al.), which haven't always formed a bloc with the main imperialist powers and, for example, took a position favorable to Vietnam during the period of American aggression. To this end, a mission to the aforementioned states is contemplated.

About the USA—the USA and other imperialist states aim to overthrow the Ethiopian regime (the minister claims that the USA has prepared a plot to do this). Despite this, the minister said, Ethiopia aims to use the contradictions among the Westerners in the interests of the Ethiopian revolution, and also the fact that officially the USA and other Western states have come out in support of the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and [express] the desire to have normal relations with it.

At the same time, the diplomatic activity of the PMAC will develop cooperation with communist and socialist parties of the USA and Western Europe (to this end the PMAC invited representatives of the communist parties of the USA, Italy, and Portugal to take part in the celebrations), and also with the international democratic, labour, women's and youth organizations (World Peace Council, Movement of Afro-Asian Solidarity, etc.).

The minister especially dwelled on the Chinese position on the Ethiopian revolution. At the beginning of the revolution, the PRC provided economic assistance to Ethiopia, and sent its economic experts. However, as the Ethiopian revolution deepened, the Chinese began to change their position, practically rendered comprehensive assistance to Somalia during the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict, and, it seems, intends to give it (Somalia) conventional battlefield weapons.

Recognizing the great significance of the diplomatic activity of the Soviet Union in support of Ethiopia, the minister expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would continue it in the future, and, in particular, would use its own friendly relations

with Algeria and influence in the Arab world and with African states, and also with the communist and progressive organizations in Western, African, and Arab countries.

Felleke Gedle-Giorgis expressed his gratitude for the clear position of the USSR in the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict. In light of this, the minister emphasized that Ethiopia does not aim to dismember Somalia and does not intend to interfere in its internal affairs. The minister also said that Ethiopia supports the improvement of cooperation with Somalia. This being said, the Ethiopian government proceeds from the fact that Somalia has progressive forces, which are also striving for the restoration of neighborly relations and peaceful cooperation with Ethiopia.

For his part, comrade Yezhov, I.M. and the Soviet ambassador reaffirmed the position of the Soviet Union on the problem of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict and directed attention to the necessity of activating Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts in various countries. They reminded the minister of the diplomatic steps taken by the Soviet Union in support of Ethiopia (demarches towards the leaders of Somalia, a range of Arab states, et al.).

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ A. Ratanov

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 135-138; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**Memorandum of Conversation with
Ethiopian Foreign Secretary Dawit
Wolde Giorgis, 17 September 1977,
with Attached Memorandum on
Operation "Fakel" (Torch)**

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2
From diary of 29 September 1977
A. P. Ratanov Ser. No. 352

Memorandum of Conversation with
Permanent Secretary of the Foreign
Ministry DAWIT WOLDE GIORGIS
17 September 1977

We received a visit from Dawit at his request. Pursuant to instructions from the Chairman of the PMAC [Mengistu], he furnished a document concerning an imperialist conspiracy against Ethiopia designated

by the code name "Fakel" [Torch], which was brought to the attention of the ambassadors of the Socialist Bloc Countries at a meeting with Haile Mariam Mengistu that took place on 10 September 1977. This document consists of a summary presentation of instructions and telegrams, sent during the period of 12 February through 4 June of this year by the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi (under the signature of D. Wardner, and later E. Kelly), to the American Embassies in Khartoum and Dar-es-Salam.

According to the document, the aim of perpetrating "intervention and destabilization of circumstances in Ethiopia" is to be carried out by three groups: (1) *Nuba* (2) *Anyanya*, to be carried out in the southwestern region of Ethiopia (in the territory of the Sudan); and the third group consisting of "hostile elements in southeastern Ethiopia" (in Kenyan territory). The training and arming of these groups, primarily with American weapons, is to be carried out by 16 September of this year. Commencement of operation "Fakel" is planned for 1 October 1977.

The starting point for all operations is to be the assassination, on 1 October of this year, of the Chairman of the PMAC, as well as that of his Deputy, to be followed by an attack by Groups 1 and 2 from Sudanese territory. Two weeks thereafter, an attack by the third group from Kenyan territory is planned. The establishment of a third front of military operations, as contemplated by the instigators of the plan, will lead to an "automatic attack by Ethiopia on Sudan." In the event of a retaliatory attack on Kenya, it is contemplated that the marines (the document does not specify of what nationality) and forces of "other moderate countries" will be used.

Attachment: see four-page list appended hereto.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ A. RATANOV

cc: 3 AFO
Defense Ministry, CC CPSU
UOMP
UPVM
9/26/77

[Stamp]
Attachment to Doc. No. 352
dated 9/29/77

Translated from English [into Russian]

OPERATION "FAKEL"

Preparation of the creation of a paramilitary unit for the execution of intervention in Ethiopia and destabilization of circumstances there shall commence on 14 April 1977. According to information available to us, all preparations, including the delivery of materials necessary for military operations, and training of a reserve contingent, shall be completed by 16 September 1977. The operation, which shall commence on 1 October 1977, is designated by the code name "FAKEL."

The forces to be implemented in the said operation shall consist of three separate groups:

Force No. 1 - Nuba group.

Force No. 2 - Anyanya group.

Force No. 3 - Hostile elements from the southeastern region of Ethiopia.

Forces No. 1 and 2 will operate in the southeastern region of Ethiopia and, according to the plan, shall direct their attention toward adaptation to conditions in the given location.

In the preparatory period, Group No. 3 will operate mainly in Kenya, but after the commencement of military operations, responsibility for it shall be transferred to Somalia.

The above information constitutes the essence of telegrams and instructions of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to the American Ambassador in Dar-es-Salaam during the period between 12-26 February 1977, sent by Dixon Werdner, an employee of the political section of that embassy, who is believed to be a CIA agent.

Subsequent communications, sent from the American Embassy in Nairobi to the U.S. Ambassador in Khartoum and Dar-es-Salaam under the signature of Major Eddy Kelly, describe the make-up of the staff, the preparation, and the objectives of the said operation. It is known that Major Eddy Kelly, who apparently has replaced Dixon Werdner, leader of operation "Fakel," is none other than Edmund Kelly, the third secretary of the political section of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

The first communication from Kelly, dated 4 May 1977, indicates that military fortifications are located en route to Mombasa (Kenya) and that the dispatch of

materials to designated points shall be implemented at night and by separate parties in order to prevent the leak of information. Fortifications shall be delivered to the northwestern region of Kenya, i.e., to the location of the prospective conflict, within 20-30 days from day "X".

His second communication, dated 18 May 1977, indicates that the materials necessary for military operations were dispatched from the northwestern region of Kenya to the designated point in the Sudan. Recognizing that fortifications of the principal strike force are undergoing intensive preparation, Kelly emphasizes the need for absolute secrecy and the paramount concentration of attention on the principal objective (Ethiopia) and rapid preparations.

On 23 June 1977, Kelly dispatched a telegram to the American Embassy in Khartoum, demanding the completion of the following four specific assignments:

- assessment of the strength of enemy forces;
- determination of the actual disposition of military forces in conformance with communist military doctrine, as well as the quantity, methods and means for the transfer of reinforcements;
- confirmation of the receipt of materials as soon as they are delivered; and
- completion of all preparations by 16 September 1977, in order to avoid any alteration of the plan.

On 2 July 1977, Kelly sent two telegrams to the U.S. Embassies in Khartoum and Dar-es-Salaam.

In the first telegram, the objective and plan of action, projected for day "X", are set forth as follows:

Objective: Carry out the assassination of the head of the Ethiopian government with the aim of creating a panic situation in the country. Following that will be the coordination of an attack by forces hostile to Ethiopia, from the southwest and east.

Plan of action: Forces No. 1 and 2 will commence operations on 1 October 1977. Force No. 3 will commence military action two weeks thereafter.

Rear section and fortification: support for the southwestern group shall be provided from "Point No. 1." Force No. 3 will receive support from the side of a friendly country on the southeast of the country.

A command and support group for the forces of No. 1 and 2 will be located in the

region of Juba and Lyuan [sic], and, for the forces of No. 3, in a friendly country.

Timetable for operation: Hour "X" and the signal for commencement of operations will be communicated later.

The second telegram describes the conduct of operations envisioned in the first telegram:

- Assassination of the head of government will lead to chaos and disorder in Ethiopia. Following that the advancement of Forces 1 and 2 into the southwest will ensue.

- Establishment of this second front will prevent the Ethiopian forces from focusing attention on the other front. This will create a desirable opportunity for an attack from the southeast and will result in a two-pronged conflict.

- Ethiopia will automatically attack the Sudan, and the intensification of activity in the southeast will, within two weeks, lead to a similar situation in Somalia.

- The center of the rear forces and material fortification in Mendera will provide for support to Forces 1 and 2.

- If Kenya suffers an attack, then subdivisions of the marines and forces of other moderate governments will be deployed to this region.

On 4 July 1977, Kelly sent four telegrams to Khartoum and Dar-es-Salaam.

Two of these telegrams contain a detailed enumeration of the military fortifications which are already delivered or are located en route from the USA and a "Country of apple juice." In sum, this includes 16,000 rifles, 559,000 rounds of ammunition, as well as an undisclosed quantity of tear gas canisters, tracer bullets, bombs, mines, and propaganda materials. This equipment will be stored for transport and will be delivered to "Point One" by "friendly hands." Transportation will begin on 27 August and the equipment will arrive at "Point One" on 30 August 1977.

Two other telegrams are addressed to that portion of the operation which relates to elimination of the head of the government. The assassin, as they refer to him, from the Nuba group (Force No. 1), will liquidate the head of the government (Bomen) on 1 October 1977, during his trip to southwestern Ethiopia, scheduled for September. The second participant (referred to in the text as the "third"), to be selected for completion of this assignment, will be offered by the

Nuba group (Force No. 1). In the event that the trip to the southwest is cancelled, the means must be found to send all groups to Addis Ababa for execution of the operation. In the event that the assassination of the head of the government (Bomen) is unsuccessful, then his deputy is to be killed. N.B. - Kelly has repeatedly warned that all preparations must be completed by 16 September 1977, that the date for execution of the operation - Day "X" - is set for 1 October that it is necessary to maintain this timetable, and that it is essential to do everything in order to ensure the success of this operation.

At the end of all his telegrams, Kelly also instructs those who receive them to direct their responses to the Division of Covert Operations for Eastern and Central Africa of the State Department.

Transmitted by: /s/ V. Mishachev
/s/ V. Mikhailov

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 129-134; translated by Bruce McDonald.]

**CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on
30-31 October 1977 Closed Visit of
Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow,
8 November 1977**

Confidential

With regard to the request of the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of Ethiopia Mengistu Haile Mariam, he was received in Moscow on 30-31 October, this year, on a closed [*zakritii*] visit. On 31 October he had a conversation with L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin and A.A. Gromyko.

Mengistu informed in detail about the domestic political situation in Ethiopia, about the grave situation on the northern, eastern and southeastern fronts, where the battle is raging against the Eritrean separatists, [and] counterrevolutionary formations and regular units of the Somali army. The separatists succeeded in seizing the main cities of Eritrea, except for Asmara and the port of Massawa. Somali troops occupied in effect the whole Ogaden, with exception of Harar and Dire Dawa.

Mengistu spoke about the hostile activity of Sudan and other reactionary Arab states who plan in connection to the unification of

the three separatist states in Eritrea to set up an Eritrean "government" and to proclaim "an independent state." Mengistu confirmed the aspiration of Ethiopia to settle Ethiopian-Somali relations in a peaceful way. He declared that Ethiopian armed forces set the goal of the liberation of Ethiopian territory and do not intend to cross the frontiers of their country.

Mengistu pointed out that an inauspicious situation on the battlefields and the threat of partition that [hangs over] the Ethiopian state has wrought a negative influence on the economic and domestic political situation of the country, undermine faith in the victory of the Ethiopian revolution, [and] encourage activities of internal reactionary forces.

Revolutionary Ethiopia, in Mengistu's words, finds itself now in the enemy's encirclement and aspires to support of first of all the socialist states. By referring to the need to improve Ethiopia's defense under these circumstances, Mengistu made a request to broaden Soviet military assistance.

Expanding on all this, Mengistu spoke about his confidence in a final victory of the revolution, stressing that the masses of people firmly support the revolution and its achievements that are being accomplished in the interests of the people.

On our side we confirmed the principled line of the Soviet Union to give all-sided support to the Ethiopian revolution and to continue the further expansion of Soviet-Ethiopian relations. Mengistu also received an agreement to supply during this year an additional amount of Soviet armaments and military equipment. He also received the principled assurances of the Soviet side to grant the PMAC assistance in working out plans of social-economic development of Ethiopia, including the dispatch to Addis Ababa of certain specialists.

As a comradely advice, [the Soviet side] shared with Mengistu ideas in favor of the accelerated creation in Ethiopia of a party based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, which would further the mobilization of masses to defend revolutionary conquests and to promote the revolution. It was stressed to be important for the PMAC to adopt practical measures to resolve the nationalities question in Ethiopia in order to ensure the support of the progressive regime on the part of national minorities.

For the moment, we are left with the defi-

nite impression that in the existing situation in Ethiopia and around it, the PMAC urgently needs further assistance of our fraternal countries through the mechanism of bilateral relations, as well as on the international arena.

[Source: SAPMO, JIV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

Conversation between East German Socialist Unity Party (SED) official F. Trappen and CPSU CC official K. Brutents, 7 November 1977 (excerpt)

Memorandum of Conversation
between Comrade Friedel Trappen and
Comrade Karen Brutents, Deputy Head of
the International Relations Department of
the Central Committee of the CPSU,
7 November 1977

[Names of other participants]

Comrade Brutents thanked [Trappen] for the interesting information. The Soviet comrades completely agree with our policy. The information they just received [from the SED] contains several new aspects. There has been only little information on the developments within the Eritrean Liberation Movement, in particular concerning the Marxist forces within this movement. It would be of extraordinary importance if these contacts would make possible contacts between the Eritrean movement and the Ethiopian leadership which could lead to an armistice and pave the way for a peaceful political solution.

So far the Ethiopian leadership has not exhausted all possibilities for such a solution. It is necessary to support them in this, and in this sense the contacts facilitated by the SED are of great importance.

It now is important to utilize actively these contacts for fruitful political work in favor of a peaceful and political solution.

In the talks between the comrades of the CPSU and the Ethiopian delegation it was repeatedly emphasized that national problems cannot be solved militarily.

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/126; obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Memorandum of Conversation, East

German official with Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov, Addis Ababa, 6 December 1977 (dated 7 December)

Comrade Ratanov gave the following information:

Militarily, the Eastern front is presently the most difficult problem for the Ethiopian side. Due to the correlation of forces the initiative is with the Somali side. The Ethiopian troops are forced onto the defense. The Ethiopian side is making all-out efforts to mobilize around 60,000 to 70,000 men. About 20,000 men will already be available within the next few weeks. They will be trained in short training courses. The Ethiopian side will be able to go on the offensive in about 1 1/2 to 2 months.

The technical superiority of the Somali troops is most prominent in heavy artillery. Although the Ethiopian side has - due to Soviet deliveries - at its disposal over 510 heavy guns while Somalia only has 126, there is a lack of soldiers who can handle the heavy artillery. The training is still taking time.

300 Cuban military experts (artillery, tank drivers, pilots) are expected to arrive soon.

The Ethiopian side currently has about 137 tanks on the Eastern front. The Somali side has about 140.

40 Ethiopian tanks cannot be used in battle due to minor repairs. Though these repairs would normally be done by the tank drivers themselves, they are not capable of doing so. On the Somali side such repairs are possible because the Soviet Union had established the necessary repair station.

In recent days, the Ethiopian side has for the first time launched air attacks on mobile objects using the MiG 21. The negative opinion about the MiGs has meanwhile improved (the [U.S.] F-5 is a much improved model with a wider operational range).

Comrade Ratanov gave the following explanation of the Eritrean problem:

If it were possible to give the Ethiopian side a breathing-spell in Eritrea, it could focus its efforts on the Eastern front. A dialogue has to be initiated. This has not been done so far. In this regard, it would not be advantageous to show all our cards right away.

It is of critical importance that the Ethiopian side is not willing to grant the

Eritrean population autonomy within the bounds of its old territories. They assume that other peoples still reside in Eritrea (e.g. Tigre and Afars). This has to be taken into consideration. Therefore they want to trim Eritrean territory. The area of the Afars around the port of Assab as well as the Tigre are to be separated. This would be almost half of Eritrean territory.

Should the Ethiopian leadership stick with this point of view, it will be difficult to find a common ground for negotiations. (Various peoples live, for example, in Dagestan and Georgia. There are autonomous territories within the individual republics of the [Soviet] Union.) The most important thing is to get both parties to the negotiating table.

The first point of the 9-point program on Eritrea states autonomy with respect to tribes/peoples but not with respect to territories. Mengistu has stated in a previous speech that Ethiopia would be willing to grant more autonomy to Eritrea than it had before. But he has not yet stated what he meant by this.

On the correlation of forces within the PMAC:

Mengistu has further consolidated his position since the elimination of [Co-chairman of the Coordinating Committee of the Armed forces (DERG) Lt. Col.] Atnafu Abate. He has further gained stature as a revolutionary statesman. One senses in speaking with him that he views things realistically. At the same time one has to reckon with his complicated character.

On the establishment of the Party:

One has to convince the Ethiopian side that it is an illusion to be able to create a monolithic party from the start. The party can only be created in the fight against the various currents. It has to develop on the basis of social conditions. [...]

There will be risks involved in the establishment of the party which have to be taken into consideration. During the establishment of the party one has to deliberate the question of co-option.

The PMAC presently has about 80 members. 30 of them are a burden. These members hardly have any education and can easily become victims of the counter-revolution. Mengistu intends to send them to the USSR, Cuba, and the GDR to turn them into revolutionaries. Only 25 to 20 men belong to the active inner circle. It is therefore nec-

essary upon the establishment of the party to add to the leadership other capable forces from outside. There will be a fight about the leadership positions within the central committee of the party. If the forces around Mengistu do not succeed in this fight, then the CC will not be an improvement in quality over the present PMAC. The Ethiopian leadership has lately devoted much attention to the establishment of the party. There still exists great confusion with respect to ideological questions as well as strategy and tactics. For example, they have only diffuse ideas about the class basis.

The workers, the peasants, the left wing of the petit-bourgeoisie as well as anti-feudal and anti-imperialist elements belong to the forces which support the Revolution. There is no talk about a national bourgeoisie. From the start it has been perceived as an enemy. There are also a great number of honest people among the state apparatus and the officers corps. The minister for agriculture has stated that they would probably some day appoint him ambassador in order to get rid of him. Many people have gone abroad out of fear. Not all of them were counterrevolutionaries.

On the question of non-capitalist development with Socialist orientation: Within the leadership there is nobody who knows what this state of development really means. It is presented as a Socialist revolution. For example, the development of kulaks is rejected. 75% of the rural population is still involved in a produce-based economy. Who should develop agricultural production? There are no social statistics on which the development of the Ethiopian village could be based. There are regulations for private investments but they are not propagated. The bourgeoisie has money but is afraid to invest because it fears nationalization. One should follow the example of the USSR and develop a NEP [New Economic Policy], thus providing a prospect for all social classes.

Atnafu was criticized for problems which he rightfully brought up. He favored the development to a mixed society. It was another thing that he opposed socialism altogether. Now nobody dares to say anything anymore. The mood of the workers and peasants is extremely leftist. It will take great persuasion to convince them of the necessity of a NEP. On the other hand there is the danger that the PMAC will become too dis-

tant from the people.

On the national question:

One has to try — through political work and by a intelligent policy towards the nationalities — to make all members of individual ethnic groups to feel as Ethiopians first. Members of all ethnic groups should be represented in ministries and other institutions on an equal basis. The various individual nationalities have not even been represented in the PMAC. Its composition came about by accident. The popular mood is directed in particular against Amharen. Therefore Mengistu was elected chairman. He evolved as the strongman. The Soviet military experts have come to realize that no decision is made without his agreement.

[Source: SAPO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/126; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

**Memorandum of a Conversation
between East German leader Erich
Honecker and Siassi Aforki, General
Secretary of the Revolutionary Party of
Eritrea, in Berlin, 31 January 1978
(dated 3 February 1978)**

Honecker: [Welcoming remarks]

Aforki: We are very proud and very happy about this meeting. It is a historical meeting. The first visit of our comrades in the GDR already brought very positive results. [...] We highly appreciate the good offices of your country and your party. What we have achieved so far is already a turning-point in our fight. The results of the meeting with the Ethiopians are still uncertain, but in any case it will be a historic meeting. In the past 17 years a fierce battle has been waged. Not one meeting took place between Eritreans and Ethiopians. If something developed from this first meeting, this will not only be good for our two countries but for the peoples of the entire world. The only pre-condition for it is goodwill on the Ethiopian and on our side.

[Short review of the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict.]

Comrade Erich Honecker: For the first dialogue with the Ethiopians it will be decisive to consider in which direction one has to become active in the interest of the Revolution. We are deeply interested in the success of the Ethiopian Revolution and in the objectives of the Eritrean People's Libera-

tion Movement. Both sides have the goal to repel the imperialist intervention and build a new humane social order. It is very painful that comrades who are ideologically close are involved in such a conflict. We welcome the fact that Comrade Aforki has the determination and mandate to come to Berlin to find out together with the representatives of the DERG how the problems can be solved. We have used our influence as much as possible to make sure that you will be heard. Now much depends on the dialogue which - after 17 years - can lead to a turning-point. As I understand Comrade Aforki, he is moving in this direction. In his conversation with Comrade Werner Lamberz, Comrade Mengistu indicated his readiness to grant the people of Eritrea full autonomy within the Ethiopian state. What form this should take is a matter to be dealt with by both sides. The national question has immense importance for the whole Ethiopian Revolution. Its solution is also hindered by Somalia's aggression. Somalia currently receives the support of all imperialist governments. Concerning the Eritrean question, one has to see the opportunity given by [the similarity of] the contents of the Eritrean Liberation Movement and the Ethiopian Revolution. I agree with Comrade Aforki that a solution would be of great significance not only for the peoples of Ethiopia and Africa but also for all peoples. We accord great significance to the currently arranged contact and the incipient dialogue. We hope it will lead to agreement. The revolutionary streams belong together. Comrade Aforki has rightly stated that one can then proceed together against the imperialists. From my point of view, the full autonomy within the Ethiopian state is the correct solution in order to pursue together the common task of economic build-up and the creation of a progressive social order in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Your forthcoming meeting can be successful. It is a historic meeting. I am interested in the question if you, Comrade Aforki, in the case one might come to an agreement, will have the strength to implement it. Besides you, there are two other movements in Eritrea. In case of an agreement one would have to carefully plan all steps.

Comrade S. Aforki: The main problem is in how far Ethiopia is willing to meet our demands. It is clear from the start that if Ethiopia is not bringing along new propos-

als, a solution will not be possible. There is no point in discussing the possibility of unifying both revolutions. What we need are guarantees that the fight against imperialism and reaction will continue. Only one principal question is of importance. Everything depends on the capabilities and tactics of our organization. We won't be picky in minor questions. It is totally clear to us that in the case of an actual agreement its implementation is the important thing. Then we will check the details and implement them patiently. Eritrea has many enemies within and without. If they all find out about it, we will have many difficulties. But we are preparing for it. It is true that we are not the only organization. That, however, does not worry us. Because of our great influence and military strength we can succeed. The other two organizations in Eritrea have allied themselves with the imperialists and the reaction in the Arabic region.

We have to expect that the imperialists will take advantage of the situation in case of a solution of the Eritrean problem and escalate the situation and heighten the conflict. Therefore it is necessary that the Socialist countries will guarantee a peaceful solution. In the case of an agreement prudent tactics are necessary not to allow the reactionaries to exert their influence. In Ethiopia as well there are forces which are powerfully fighting against a just solution. The current regime cannot proceed against these forces by itself. This is an important question.

Honecker: [Report on GDR domestic and foreign policy]

[Concluding remarks]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Memorandum of Conversation between East German official Paul Markovski and CPSU CC International Department head Boris N. Ponomarev in Moscow, 10 February 1978 (dated 13 February 1978)

[Markovski informs Ponomarev on talks between PMAC (Ethiopia) and EPLF (Eritrea)]

Comrade B.N. Ponomarev thanked M. for the valuable information, said that they appreciated the GDR initiative and ex-

plained the attitude of the CPSU in this question: the CPSU is also of the opinion that Ethiopia's position in the Eritrean question is different one from its relationship with Somalia. Somalia is an aggressor who attacked Ethiopia. The Soviet and Cuban comrades have declared together with the Ethiopian leadership that no Somali territory will be entered in the course of the Ethiopian counter-offensive. This information was also given to the USA.

In his talk with Comrade Ponomarev, President Carter emphasized the situation on the Horn of Africa and pretended to be concerned about Soviet arms deliveries to Ethiopia. In response Ponomarev pointed to the much larger US arms deliveries to Iran, a country neighboring on the USSR. He repudiated Carter's insinuations that Cuban and Soviet troops were fighting in Ethiopia. The Soviet military were advisers who had been sent at the request of the Ethiopian government. Carter said he favored a speedy settlement of the conflict. He explained that the USA would neither now nor in the future deliver arms to Somalia. It was pointed out to Carter and [U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus R.] Vance that the Soviet Union had tried over a longer period of time to convince Siad Barre, Samantar and other Somali leaders not to begin a war. Their efforts, however, proved to be in vain.

With respect to the situation in Eritrea, Comrade Ponomarev mentioned the conversations between the Soviet leadership and Mengistu Haile Mariam in the course of which it was recommended to Mengistu to seek to a political solution to the problem and to grant autonomy to the Eritreans. Since then no new discussions between the Soviet side and the Ethiopians have taken place. Mengistu has been silent. Up to now he has not done anything to follow our advice. The Cuban comrades have unequivocally told the Ethiopian leadership that Cuba would not intervene in the Eritrean conflict, in a domestic Ethiopian conflict. The best thing would be a peaceful solution. Both sides need to take the right attitude towards the problem. Mengistu is, however, wavering according to the military situation. As the military pressure the rebels were exerting on Massawa and Asmara was increasing, he was ready for a compromise. Now that this situation has become a bit more stable, he is silent or makes pungent statements. We have to continue to work on him.

Any solution has to be found within the framework of the Ethiopian state although this is uncomfortable for the Eritrean movements. Comrade Ponomarev read a telegram from Belgrade on an information [report] by the head of the bureau of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] in Baghdad, Abu Nidal (he belongs to the left wing of the Fatah). Abu Nidal has traveled through Eritrea. According to his information, all regions except for Massawa and Asmara are in the hands of the Eritreans. The coastal area is controlled by EPLF under the leadership of Aforki while Western Eritrea is under the control of the ELF (Mohammed Ahmed Nasser). The Eritreans want full autonomy but are also willing to accept an Ethiopian corridor to the sea. The majority of Aforki's organizations consist of Marxist-Leninist elements. Abu Nidal was informed that Aforki was at a meeting in Berlin. He was willing to meet with representatives of the CPSU. Abu Nidal emphasizes that it would be necessary to quickly find a solution since Saudi Arabia and other reactionary forces were exerting strong pressure upon the Eritrean movements.

Comrade Ponomarev stated that the CPSU did not think a meeting with Aforki was necessary after a meeting between him and the SED had just taken place. The SED was to continue its conversations with the Eritreans.

Comrade Ponomarev informed me that the Ethiopian leadership recently approached the CPSU with a request for support in the build-up of the party. A group of experienced comrades of the CPSU has been selected. Its head is a member of the CC. Later, however, Mengistu requested to hold off the sending of these comrades since military questions were the top priority. Comrade Ponomarev favored close cooperation between the Soviet comrades, the Cuban comrades, and the SED group in order to assure maximum efficiency and coordinated strategy.

Comrade Ponomarev expressed his concern over the extremes in the Ethiopian Revolution. In talks with Mengistu, [Cuban] comrade Raul Valdes Vivo has already stated that such events as the mass executions of prisoners led by the "Red Terror," which would not be advantageous to the Revolution, are incomprehensible.

Much now depends on what attitude Mengistu himself will take towards the

Eritrean problem. It has to be expected that - as L. I. Brezhnev told Mengistu - the national question cannot be solved militarily.

Comrade Ponomarev agreed with the proposal communicated by Comrade Markovski to consult on the burning African questions among the six close friends at the forthcoming conference of the CC Secretaries in Budapest.

Comrade Ponomarev reported on his recent visit to the USA as the head of a delegation of parliament members. In his report to the politburo, he proposed to continue to work with the USA Congress. Congress nowadays has greater importance since the prestige of the USA administration is lower than ever before due to Watergate and Vietnam and since Carter has not shown enough stature [*profil*]. There are realistic forces in Congress, but also the "hawks", the obstinate defenders of the neutron bomb (Strand [sic; perhaps a reference to conservative Democratic Sen. John C. Stennis or Sen. Richard Stone], [Democratic Sen. Henry] Jackson et al.). He, Comrade Ponomarev, made a total of 25 speeches. There were useful talks with Carter and Vance. The visit showed that there are possibilities for a dialogue. They have to be utilized by the common efforts of the Socialist countries. In this respect, Comrade Ponomarev pointed to two problems:

1. The forthcoming (May) UN Special Meeting of the UN Plenum should be used by the active appearance of all 9 friendly Socialist countries for the fight against the neutron bomb and for effective disarmament measures. The level of participation should be cleared in time. In these questions one can count on the Non-Alignment Movement. At the same time it offers the possibility to effectively expose and isolate Chinese policy.

2. In Europe, especially in the FRG, the fight against the neutron bomb needs further strengthening. In the Low Countries, Denmark, and Norway there already exist broad movements whereas France has so far kept out. If a broad movement which would exert influence on the government could be brought about in the FRG, this could be a great success. We all should contribute to this, including the DKP [West German Communist Party]. It is important to use all possibilities and to also work with personalities like [former West German Chancellor and Social Democratic Party (SPD) official

Willy] Brandt or [prominent SPD figure Herbert] Wehner.

There has been no response to the respective notes by Comrade Brezhnev to Carter and other Western chiefs of state.

[Concluding remarks]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

SED CC, Department of International Relations, 16 February 1978, Report on Conversation with [Vice-president] Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Member of the Politburo of the CP Cuba, in Havana, 13 February 1978

[Participants: Comrade Polanco, Deputy Head of CC Department for International Relations CP Cuba; Comrade Heinz Langer, Extraordinary Plenipotentiary and Ambassador in Cuba]

[Welcoming remarks]

Rodriguez: The initiative and the efforts of the SED merit the highest recognition. The [Ethiopian-Eritrean] meeting in Berlin was of great historical importance. We fully agree with the strategy of the SED; this fully conforms with our common concept of efforts towards a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem as agreed between us. I would like to emphasize that there is complete agreement among us and that the politburo of our party completely approves of the strategy, the estimate, the arguments and the conclusion in this matter.

The leadership of our party has for some time expected a declaration by Mengistu on the Eritrean problem. This had been agreed up between him and comrade Valdes Vivo in the 5-point program at the end of last year.

Comrade Werner Lamberz had detailed this still more in his talk with Mengistu and there was, as you know, the affirmation that this declaration would still come in December. Obviously the Ethiopian comrades have not been sufficiently ready for it and still have numerous reservations against a decisive step towards the solution of the Eritrean problem.

We also completely agree with the view that the Ethiopian leadership apparently does not have a clear concept, either on a general solution of the national prob-

lem in Ethiopia nor on the specific problems in Eritrea. They have until now not really seriously believed in it and have not seriously concerned themselves with it but instead only considered the demand for a peaceful solution as [in itself] a kind of political solution.

They probably still have the thought in the back of their minds that a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem will mean a capitulation by the Eritrean movements, which means that the military solution would be the preparation for a further peaceful strategy.

One can certainly not neglect the military measures in this matter, but the Ethiopian comrades still do not have the deep recognition of the necessity of a political, i.e. peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem. Thus just as much as one can certainly argue that the leadership of the EPLF does not have an understanding of the historic importance of the Ethiopian Revolution, one can also argue that the awareness of the responsibility for the Revolutionary development in the entire region is not deeply rooted in the Ethiopian leadership.

[...]It is necessary that we continue our intense efforts on this common line in order to have all participants make a common effort. In this respect the written agreement that was achieved is of enormous significance. The further strategy in the Ogaden will be decisive and of utmost importance for the question of how things will continue, probably also for the solution of the Eritrean problem. Comrade Mengistu certainly did not want to make any concessions on this question as long as he seemed close to being defeated on all fronts. It will be important not to have a growing feeling of capitulation. From this point of view his reservations and hesitation with the promised declaration are understandable.

Now we are rapidly approaching another situation which will lead to certain decisions. There are two possibilities which might be expected after the success against Somalia on the eastern front. On the one hand [there could be] a generous, calm, objective, and thought-out approach to a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem, an approach which is not caused by coercion, [but] which is based on the authority of victory and which therefore can take advantage of a vastly new possibilities for a peaceful solution. This would be a strategy in con-

formity with a remark by Aforki which relates to the generosity which they - the Eritreans - had expected from the Ethiopians. We would encourage this way of proceeding which would be in conformity with our views. On the other hand, however, a worsening of the situation is possible.

Based on the success at the eastern front and carried by the euphoria of victory and given the possibility to withdraw strong and experienced Ethiopian units, the Ethiopian leadership could aspire to a decisive and quick military solution in Eritrea. Unfortunately there are significant forces within the PMAC calling for such a solution.

Comrade Mengistu has now asked the leadership of the CP Cuba for the second time not only to give military support in Ogaden but also to deploy Cuban units in Eritrea.

Towards the end of last year he dramatically called on us, arguing that Cuban troops should immediately intervene in Eritrea since otherwise the final loss of this area was imminent and hence would have incalculable consequences for the Ethiopian Revolution. In close consultation with the Soviet comrades, Comrade Fidel Castro favored a massive intervention in the Ogaden against the Somali invasion. He emphasized that this now was clearly a domestic Ethiopian matter and that we would have the OAU, the African states, international laws and conventions, as well as the UN on our side. Comrade Castro refused to intervene in Eritrea. We have promised every kind of aid except for military units to our Ethiopian comrades. We have based this on the view that this was a justified national cause of the Eritrean people which could not be solved militarily. Now, a few days ago, Comrade Mengistu has asked again and spoke of a dramatic and dangerous development in the situation; again he demanded to have Cuban units deployed at the Eritrean front.

Comrade Fidel Castro and all the members of our politburo are of the opinion that we cannot afford to make any mistakes in our handling of the Eritrean question. A wrong move now could endanger our entire policy and important positions in Africa. We would be confronted by the majority of African states, the Arabs, international organs, probably also the countries of the Non-Alignment Movement, and others.

Therefore we continue to oppose a military intervention in Eritrea. In coordination with our Soviet comrades we have agreed to occupy the entrance to the Mits'iwa Islands from where a certain degree of control can be exerted and from where in an extreme emergency a limited military intervention would be possible.

In this connection it is very important that we immediately think about Aforki's demand for a guarantee by the Socialist countries. It might be necessary to work out a common basic view with the Soviet Union before the next meeting because it is to be expected that Aforki will not only present concrete proposals but will also expect from the representatives of the Socialist countries a concrete response. Our view is based on the fact that we have and will take on a moral obligation towards the Eritreans when we urge upon them the political and peaceful solution according to the concept agreed among us. They could certainly then not withhold the pressure of the enemy on their own. There is the danger here too that the Ethiopian comrades may not pay attention to the changed situation and are looking for an easy success which would be costly for us in political and moral terms with other countries.

Comrade Rodriguez also informed us about some other questions:

- [Iraq]

- A few days ago, Comrade Nagere, member of the politburo of the Meison group [All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement, defeated by Mengistu] (supposedly in the second rank of this organization behind Prof. Haile Fidda) has asked the Cuban comrades for consultation. The Cubans have consulted with Mengistu who did not oppose such a meeting but characterized Negere as a traitor. He will come in the next few days to Havana, and our Cuban comrades will inform us immediately about these talks via our ambassador.

- On the situation in the Ogaden, Comrade Rodriguez informed us that a large counter-offensive had been in preparation since 25 December 1977. There have been two major campaigns in recent days which caused losses of more than 3000 men on the other side. It is a serious problem that the Ethiopian comrades do not want to take prisoners of war and thus act very cruelly. These blows have caused the enemy large material losses as well while our own have been

very small. In the last movement in the Northeast there was a smaller loss of human life but the material losses have been very great. The Somalis have over 40 tanks, numerous medium-weight and heavy weapons, flack artillery, armored cars and a great amount of weapons and munitions. In part, they have left behind NATO war material which was not even unwrapped. In the fights around Dire Dawa, the Somalis had to pull back, leaving almost their entire armament.

Up to now, there have been only preparatory blows. Most of the units marked for action have not been deployed yet, and the main blow has not even yet begun. The enemy is fleeing and giving up positions faster than had been expected. We are therefore in a situation where we have to undertake a series of fast actions so that the enemy will not have time to rebuild his forces. It is our plan to complete the main actions by the end of February 1978. This means that by early March we can expect a great victory at this front. This is, as is well known, the time for the next meeting. This will have a great effect. As agreed upon with our Soviet comrades, in no case will we transgress Somali borders.

[Final remarks.]

[Source: *SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127*; obtained and translated by *Christian F. Ostermann*.]

**Embassy of the GDR in the USSR,
Political Department, 17 February
1978, Memorandum of Conversation
with the Dep. Head of the MFA Third
Department (Africa), Comrade S. J.
Sinitsin, 16 February 1978**

[...] Comrade Sinitsin gave his estimate of the situation in Ethiopia and on the Horn of Africa.

1. The counteroffensive of the Ethiopian armed forces against the Somali troops in the Ogaden is considered positive. We are currently not dealing with a general offensive but the recovery of important strategic points which will then allow for the complete expulsion of Somali military from Ethiopian territory. So far, a 30 km to 70 km deep zone has been recovered. The air superiority of the Ethiopian forces has a great impact. Comrade Sinitsin considered the prospect for a successful conclusion of the fighting for the Ethiopians rather good;

he also emphasized, however, that military encounters will intensify. Such factors as the general mobilization in Somalia and increased arms deliveries by the West will have some effect. Also, one cannot forget the fact that significant parts of the Ethiopian armed forces have to be kept in the North and are involved in fighting counter-revolutionary groups in Eritrea. Another part of the army is necessary to guarantee security towards the Sudan. The Ethiopian army can still not be considered a homogeneous unit. Large parts of the cadres, in particular the officer corps, were taken over from the imperial government. Sabotage, insubordination, even withdrawal without fighting are serious occurrences. Great attention is therefore paid to the reorganization of the army and the concerted build-up of a popular militia. The biggest problem here is once again the cadres and their training. One should also not underestimate the problems caused by the change-over in the army from Western to Socialist weapons systems which have to be managed and deployed efficiently.

Finally, a number of problems with regard to the revolutionary development in Ethiopia need to be solved. The situation in the countryside is characterized by a heightening of class warfare. In contrast to other developing countries with a Socialist orientation, there is a strong social differentiation in Ethiopia and the implementation of class principle requires permanent relentless struggle. Although the necessity of an avant-garde party has evolved, there are currently no grounds for such a party. [...] Although there have evolved political groups at a local level which in the future could lay the foundations for a party, there exist a number of sectarian groups which at times exert large influence.

Simultaneously with the problem of building up a unified political organization with a broad popular basis, the question arises with regard to a state apparatus which is loyal to the new leadership. Army and state apparatus - both taken over from imperial times - still are divided in two camps. Many decisions taken by the revolutionary military leadership are already sabotaged within the government, even in the defense and foreign ministry. The enemies of the people's forces enjoy the full support of Western countries. Since there is a lack of trained progressive cadres, no radical solution can be pursued. All these factors point

to the conclusion that a long developmental stage will be necessary to solve the basic problems in favor of a Socialist Revolution in Ethiopia.

2. The international situation of the conflict at the Horn of Africa is characterized by the efforts of the imperialist countries to keep a crisis atmosphere on the African continent in order to achieve their long-term objectives. These plans are bound to fail with the increasing progress towards a military solution of the conflict in favor of Ethiopia. Western counter-efforts can clearly be recognized. Although the Barre regime is embarrassing to the Western powers, they are using it as a tool in their attempt to pursue their interests.

They use the lie of alleged aggressive designs on Ethiopia's part in order to conceal their direct activities in support of Somalia. The declaration of Western powers that they would not make weapons available to Somalia is refuted by arms deliveries via third, in particular reactionary Arab countries and via "private" firms. Simultaneously, the Western countries are increasing their politico-diplomatic pressure for the "independence" of the Ogaden to at least achieve a partial success which would improve the prospects for the realization of their long-term goals.

From this point of view we have to understand the willingness of the Western powers to attain an armistice without the withdrawal of Somali troops from Ethiopian territory. It is their goal to give Somalia the opportunity to consolidate its position on Ethiopian territory and to achieve, through protracted negotiations, a situation like the one in the Middle East. Therefore the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries fully support the basic Ethiopian position: armistice, withdrawal of Somali troops, and political negotiations.

The direct and indirect [Western] support for Somalia illustrates the demagogic character of the declarations of the Western governments, which shows itself in the comparison of Somalia with Ethiopia, the comparison of an aggressor with its victim, and the attempt to blame the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries for the heightening of the conflict and thus to keep them from further supporting Ethiopia. The Ethiopian leadership is carefully observing the attitude and actions of the imperialist states and differentiates between them. In this respect one

has to view Mengistu's declaration announcing to the United States, Great Britain, and the FRG that he would break diplomatic relations if they continued their direct support of Somalia. Hence he is clearly considering with subtle difference states such as Italy, which as a former colonial power is currently taking on a flexible position in Ethiopia, and France, which is above all interested in the consolidation of its position in Djibouti.

3. The conflict in the Horn of Africa has led to a strong polarization and differentiation among the African and the Middle Eastern countries. The situation in Ethiopia is made more difficult by the encirclement by reactionary regimes of states which depend upon them. While South Yemen is altogether taking a positive position on Ethiopia, the other, even many progressive, Arab nations, have considerable reservations about supporting Ethiopia. In particular, the Arab nations differ in their attitude towards Eritrea which ranges from open solidarity to direct support of the separatists in Eritrea. Reservations are also held against Libya and Algiers who do not even support the revolutionary development in Ethiopia to a full measure. Differences of opinion also exist between Syria and Iraq on the one hand, and Ethiopia on the other hand.

While the OAU has continued to defend, in the framework of its own decisions and in full agreement with Ethiopia, the integrity of Ethiopian borders, one has to differentiate the attitude of individual African countries toward the conflict.

The countries of Black Africa fully support the Ethiopian position. But the unanimous condemnation of Somalia as an aggressor was not achieved. Thus, just as a number of member states of the OAU repudiated the clear condemnation of the aggression against Angola, they also differ in their position in the evaluation of the situation on the Horn of Africa. One can also not overlook such influences as that exerted by Nigeria which favors the independence of the Ogaden.

In general, the Soviet comrades acknowledge the positive fact that the OAU will continue its activities for a settlement of the conflict. This fact is also especially important because some powers continue to pursue attempts for a settlement of the conflict by the UN Security Council. Like Ethiopia, the Soviet Union is against an interven-

tion by the Security Council since this would promote the internationalization of the conflict as intended by the Western countries. One should also remember that a takeover by the Security Council would delay a resolution of the conflict - in a similar fashion as the Middle East conflict - to an uncertain point in the future. Furthermore, a UN involvement would lead to a great power confrontation [and] would aggravate the situation within the UN which would have a negative effect upon the main problems now confronting the UN.

Although a treatment of the conflict has so far not been put before the Security Council by the Western powers, it cannot be precluded that such attempts will be undertaken. One thing is clear, they would have an anti-Soviet impetus.

With regard to Beijing's attitude towards the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, one can detect - as has been exposed in Soviet publications and mass media - a clearly hostile attitude against the Ethiopian leadership. Beijing supports, as all over the world, reactionary regimes inasmuch as this serves anti-Sovietism. Although China openly shares Somalia's point of view, its direct material support is altogether rather moderate. Besides direct arms deliveries, Beijing is supporting Somalia in the construction of roads and irrigation systems and delivers medical aid.

Existing pro-Maoist groups in Ethiopia exert very little influence and have no broad popular basis.

4. With regard to the demand by Somalia to recall its students in the USSR, Comrade Sinitin informed us about the following: Upon request of the Somali government, the Somali embassy in Moscow delivered a note to the MFA in Moscow communicating the intention to recall all Somalis residing in the USSR. The Soviet Union was asked to help with the return of the students which is to be carried out on special planes. The MFA of the USSR responded by arguing that the recall of students in ongoing training programs would be a violation of existing agreements and thus the financial burden had to be carried by Somalia.

The students' return aboard special planes itself was not refused. [...]

[Signed: Vogel]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

**Memorandum of Conversation of SED
Comrade Lamberz with Cuban
Ambassador to Ethiopia, Comrade
Pepe, Addis Ababa, 3 March 1978
(dated 4 March 1978)**

(Based on notes of Comrade General Major Jaenicke.)

[Introductory remarks]

Comrade Pepe's estimate of the situation.

There is a good development in the East. There are still Somali troops in the area of Jijiga, Dire Dawa, and Harar have been liberated. Currently [there is] a concentration on the Ethiopian side against Jijiga.

Regular Somali troops are withdrawing to the border; [they] intend to leave guerrilla fighters in Jijiga as a bridgehead. The problem of the Ethiopian troops not taking any prisoners was discussed with Mengistu; it was Mengistu's concept to take prisoners but it had not yet achieved complete awareness among the troops.

A train route was opened in the East, inhabitants return [to their homes]. The Issar and Afars were displaying good behavior; Issar in part fought on the side of the Ethiopians.

On the trip of the envoy [U.S. deputy national security advisor David Aaron] of USA President Carter to Addis Ababa: The American desire to keep the trip secret was not accepted. The USA was concerned that Ethiopia would break off diplomatic relations. The USA would be ready to respect the revolutionary development in Ethiopia and grant aid to Ethiopia if its neutrality was guaranteed. They would perhaps be willing to deliver money and spare parts.

Problems in the Ethiopia-USA relationship were not the fault of the Carter Administration but of its predecessor (for example non-compliance with weapons and material deliveries).

The United States' main concern was the Soviet and Cuban presence. The United States would not support Somalia as long as Ethiopia was operating on its own territory.

Mengistu explained to the USA envoy: It was his right to ask for advisers to come

to Ethiopia, and they would stay as long as necessary. The Carter administration was to blame for the strained Ethiopian-USA relationship (role of the CIA etc.). He emphasized the neutrality of Ethiopia which would develop toward socialism. He would not be ready to switch allies.

Mengistu's response was so good that the USA envoy immediately withdrew the demand for the immediate removal of Soviet and Cuban advisers; he demanded the withdrawal of the Cubans after the end of the Somali aggression; then the withdrawal would be necessary since otherwise this would result in a threat to USA strategic interests.

The United States attempts to get an economic foothold in Ethiopia. Possibly deliveries of arms, equipment etc. would follow to "further confuse the situation."

Comrade Pepe pointed to the fact that after the situation in the East would clear up some forces could try to perform an change of course in Ethiopia. (Something similar to [pro-Soviet and anti-American MPLA faction leader Nito] Alves in Angola.)

At the request of the Cuban comrades, Mengistu spoke publicly about the presence of Soviet and Cuban advisers. Nevertheless, the press continually claims that Ethiopia is still fighting by itself. The reason for this [is] unclear.

With respect to the "Red terror," Comrade Vivo mentioned this to Mengistu. Now there is a certain positive change. There is talk of "revolutionary legality."

[Mengistu and MEISON]

With regard to Eritrea it was attempted to convince Mengistu that a program for Eritrea had to be worked out. It would be necessary to create foundations and goals for which one could fight in Eritrea in order to be able to influence the lines of division among the various [Eritrean liberation] movements. Mengistu is not very convinced in this question. He fears other split-offs which would result in the destruction of the Ethiopian state.

Mengistu has little confidence in the talks with the Eritreans. Cuban comrades have doubts as well. Nevertheless the talks begun by the SED were very important. Perhaps they would create pre-conditions for a necessary program.

Territorial integrity and central authority had to be guaranteed. Danger of an in-

ternationalization of the conflict existed in the North, in particular in Massawa.

There are doubts about the Aforki's role.

If Massawa finally falls, one could expect that USA ships would show up in the port and Soviet ships would have to leave.

The enemy's main blow can be expected in the North. Mengistu's attitude makes it easier for the enemy. Mengistu should not be confronted with the possibility of Eritrean independence. One has to pay attention to ensure that the Eritrean problem will not lead to a worsening of relations with the Socialist countries. Comrade Raul Castro has made it clear to Mengistu that the Cubans would not participate in the fights in the North.

Even in case of an internationalization of the conflict Cuban troops could not intervene, given the lack of any program.

[Concluding remarks]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Minutes of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting, 9 March 1978 (excerpt)

Top Secret

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Working Transcript

MEETING OF THE CC CPSU POLITBURO 9 March 1978

Chaired by Com. BREZHNEV, L.I.
Attended by Coms. Grishin, V.V., Kirilenko, A.P., Kosygin, A.N., Kulakov, F.D., Mazurov, K.T., Pel'she, A.Ya., Demichev, P.N., Kuznetsov, V.V., Ponomarev, B.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Riabov, Ia.P., Rusakov, K.V.

[. . .] 12. About Measures to Settle the Ethiopia-Somalia military conflict

BREZHNEV. All comrades, evidently, have read the last telegrams from Ethiopia and Somalia in relation to Siad Barre's request concerning our mediation. At first, Mengistu's reaction to the thoughts we expressed about that issue was basically positive. But he has promised to give a final response only after he will consult with his

colleagues in the leadership. Thus far that response has not been received.

Siad Barre's reaction to the thoughts which we expressed to him in regarding his request suggests that he, as in the past, is playing a dishonest game. He obviously would like to leave some part of the forces in the Ogaden disguised as "patriotic detachments" and not to accept as a starting point for negotiations the principle of mutual respect, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-violation of borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another. He declares that these principles should be the subject of the subsequent negotiations.

On the other hand, Siad Barre's response in no way rejects the possibility of organizing a Somali-Ethiopian meeting, if Ethiopia will agree to it. Therefore, if Mengistu will give his consent to this meeting, then it seems expedient to continue our work aimed at organizing it. Simultaneously, it will of course be necessary to confirm to Siad Barre our principled approach regarding the withdrawal from Ethiopia of all Somali sub-detachments and about the principles of a settlement which are mentioned above.

I believe that it is necessary for us to continue working in this direction.

MFA USSR, the Committee of State Security, the Ministry of Defense and the International Department of the CC CPSU are assigned to continue working in the direction of a settlement of the military conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia and to submit possible proposals to the CC CPSU.

[Source: APRF, f. 3, op. 120, d. 39, ll. 97, 114; translated by Mark Doctorff.]

SED Memorandum of a Conversation with Comrade [Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Anatoly P.] Ratanov in Addis Ababa, 13 March 1978

On 13 March 1978, [GDR diplomat] Eberhard Heinrich met with the Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia, Comrade Ratanov, for an two-hour conversation.

[Other participants; opening remarks]

On the attitude towards Somalia, Comrade Ratanov explained that they had informed Mengistu on 7 March about Siad Barre's offer of negotiations. Mengistu promised to have this immediately discussed within the PMAC. He said that it would not

be bad if Somalia could be brought back into the Socialist camp regardless of the government in that country.

One had to make efforts to tear Somalia away from the imperialists and certainly there were positive forces influencing Siad Barre. Perhaps he has also acknowledged some mistakes.

The discussion within the PMAC was apparently difficult, and there was no response the next day. On 9 March, the Cuban comrades approached Mengistu with a message from Fidel Castro which contained similar recommendations. On 13 March, Ratanov met again with Mengistu and then received the written response of the Ethiopian leadership. (For a translation see appendix [not printed--ed.]). Comrade Ratanov said, in the conversation in which [Maj.] Berhanu Bayeh [Chairman of the legal and administrative affairs committee and of the special commission on Eritea] participated, that it was right to demand guarantees from Somalia and that it had to refrain from its territorial demands. At the same time it was necessary to employ the correct political tactics. We lose nothing if we agree to negotiations. One cannot demand everything in advance. This would practically mean to call for political suicide. After all Siad Barre wants to save his skin. Moreover, the Ethiopian positions could not well be presented as logical before world public opinion. At first Ethiopia declares that it would be willing to negotiate if Somalia withdraws its troops. Now that they [the Somalis] are willing to do so, the Ethiopians are retreating from their position. This attitude could well be a gift for the imperialists because Siad Barre can claim that Ethiopia was not willing to negotiate and instead was preparing for new attacks in pursuit of its goals. After consultation with Mengistu, the Soviet Union responded to Siad Barre in the following way: Ethiopia is willing to enter into negotiations with Somalia with the Soviet Union participating. It will be expected from Somalia to declare its readiness in the course of the negotiations to abandon its anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban, and anti-Ethiopian position. Somalia had to prove by its actions before domestic and world public opinion that it is indeed assuming a really new position. Under such conditions Ethiopia is willing to develop comprehensive cooperation between both countries.

On the Eritrean question, Comrade Ratanov stated that the development in Somalia was not the only thing complicating the situation. There are people within the Ethiopian leadership who, based on different positions, act in immature, arrogant, and nationalistic ways.

In a conversation, Comrade Mengistu indicated that the Socialist countries, to his mind, did not really understand the Eritrean problem. It was not a national but a class problem. He referred especially to an interview given by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a member of the politburo of the CP Cuba, to an English journalist on 12 February. In this interview, Rodriguez indicated in response to a corresponding question that the Eritrean problem had to be dealt with differently than the other questions in Ethiopia. It was concluded that the Eritrean problem was a domestic Eritrean [sic-Ethiopian?--ed.] problem.

Mengistu thought that this statement had practically given the separatists a guarantee.

The Cuban comrades have declared that Comrade Rodriguez should not be interpreted in this way.

The movements in Eritrea which are directed against the Ethiopian Revolution are objectively counter-revolutionary. There are, however, national factors which have to be acknowledged. The Arab countries are trying to separate Eritrea from Ethiopia and to make it a member of the Arab League. This would mean that Ethiopia would be cut off from the Red Sea. Mengistu has to understand that we fully understand this and also the dangers evolving from the nationalist and separatist Eritrean movements. One has to anticipate the plans of the imperialists and the reaction. It is correct that the movements have lost much of their national character but there remain genuinely national forces. It is correct that Eritrea is not a nation but this also applies to other African countries. In proceeding towards a solution in the Eritrean problem, we should distance ourselves from the separatists.

Mengistu is so far not willing to call for progressive action in Eritrea and to work together with the progressive forces. To him, Eritrea is exclusively an Ethiopian matter. He favors a continuation of military actions in order to bring under his control in particular the centers and the road to Massawa.

Currently there is a process of differ-

entiation taking place among the Eritrean movements and forces are appearing which are interested in a unification with the revolutionary Ethiopian forces.

The Ethiopian troops in Eritrea are now tired of fighting, and even the victory of the Ogaden has not changed much. Despite the success, no significant units can be withdrawn from there and a fast change in the military situation in Eritrea is not to be expected.

On the development of the Party, Mengistu has promised that a group of Soviet advisers could arrive at any time. There have been a number of delays in this question. Mengistu apparently has no concept of the cooperation with the advisers. It is necessary to convince him that the advisers could be a real help and relief. [...]

[Source: SAPMO-BA, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Soviet Foreign Ministry, Background Report on Soviet-Ethiopian Relations, 3 April 1978

Secret. Single copy
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SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS
(Reference)

Diplomatic relations between the USSR and Ethiopia were established on 21 April 1943.

Soviet-Ethiopian political cooperation before the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 developed on the basis of the historical ties between the peoples of the USSR and Ethiopia, both countries' participation in the struggle against Fascism during World War Two, and also taking into account the positive position that Ethiopia held in the struggle against colonialism and racism, in the questions of strengthening global peace and international security.

Former Emperor Haile Selassie I visited the Soviet Union in 1959, 1967, 1970, and in 1973.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) announced its course for a Socialist orientation and its intention to develop comprehensive cooperation with the USSR after it came to power on 12 Sep-

tember 1974.

The Ethiopian leadership emphasized the fact that it saw the Soviet Union as the main source of their support internationally. The positions of the PMAC on the majority of major international problems coincide with or are close to those of the USSR.

In January 1975 the PMAC leadership raised in principle the question of developing Soviet-Ethiopian relations. It was announced by our side that the Soviet Union regarded sympathetically the measures taken by the PMAC for building a new society on progressive principles, and that we shared their opinion about the need to develop comprehensive contacts between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union.

Political relations. On 6-11 July 1976 an Ethiopian state delegation led by former Chairman Mogus Wolde Michael of the PMAC Committee of Ethiopia came to the Soviet Union on an official visit. The Soviet delegation at the negotiations was led by Comrade A.A. Gromyko. Members of the Ethiopian delegation were received by Comrade A.N. Kosygin.

On 4-8 May 1977 a state delegation of Ethiopia led by Chairman Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam of the PMAC came to the Soviet Union on an official friendly visit. Mengistu Haile Mariam was received by Comrade Brezhnev.

Soviet-Ethiopian negotiations in which the sides considered the status and the prospects for further development of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, the situation in Africa, and other international problems of mutual interest were held.

The sides adopted a Declaration of the Basis for Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the USSR and Ethiopia in the name of further strengthening of Soviet-Ethiopian relations. A joint Soviet-Ethiopian communique was published on the results of the visit of the state delegation of Ethiopia to the USSR. During the visit the sides signed an Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, a Consular Convention, and the Protocol on Economic and Technological Cooperation of 6 May 1977.

On 30-31 October 1977 Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam of the PMAC of Ethiopia came to the USSR on a closed visit. During the conversation that Comrades L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin, and A.A. Gromyko had with him, it was emphasized that the USSR was going to continue to pro-

vide comprehensive assistance and support for the Ethiopian revolution in the future.

Comrades L.I. Brezhnev and Mengistu Haile Mariam repeatedly exchanged personal letters, which also contributed to a strengthening of bilateral relations.

An Ethiopian delegation led by member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC Berhanu Bayeh attended the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution [in November 1977].

In the difficult situation which emerged around revolutionary Ethiopia and in the country itself the Soviet Union has provided Ethiopia with constant political and diplomatic support, for which the leadership of Ethiopia has repeatedly expressed its deep gratitude.

Responding to the PMAC request to provide support for the peaceful settlement of the Eritrean problem the Soviet Union addressed several leaders of Arab countries and of Somalia on that issue. The Soviet Union has also made a presentation to the Iraqi government concerning the small transfers of Soviet-made weapons to the Eritrean separatists from Iraq through Sudan.

In the situation of the war unleashed by Somalia against Ethiopia and the occupation of a significant portion of its territory the Soviet Union took the position of decisive support of Ethiopia, and provided it with all kinds of assistance, including the assistance in strengthening its capability to defend itself. In our official statements and addresses to a number of African and Arab countries, and also in our contacts with the Western countries, we consistently advocated the necessity of an immediate cessation of the conflict by, first and foremost, an unconditional withdrawal of the Somali troops from the territory of Ethiopia.

In July-August 1977 the Soviet Union provided its good offices for the settlement of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict. However, during separate meetings with the representatives of both countries who came to Moscow it became clear that the two sides held uncompromising mutually exclusive positions. In those circumstances both delegations left for their countries, and the mission of good offices was suspended.

Party Contacts. At the request of the PMAC, 120 active members of the PMAC took courses on party building, organization

of labor unions, women's and youth movements, solving nationality and other issues at the CC CPSU in the Soviet Union. In 1977, 50 people were accepted to those courses. In March 1978, a group of four Soviet party officials went to Ethiopia to assist the PMAC in creating a vanguard party of the working class.

Military Cooperation. In December 1976 in Moscow Ethiopia and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the transfer of some defensive weapons and military equipment from the Soviet Union to Ethiopia in 1977-1980. Upon request from the Ethiopian side part of the weapons was delivered immediately; and in February 1977 some rifles were supplied for the Ethiopian people's militia in form of gratuitous assistance. We also gave our consent to the governments of CzSSR [Czechoslovakia], VNR [Hungary], PNR [Poland], and Cuba to supply Ethiopia with rifles produced under Soviet licenses, and to the government of the PDRY [People's Democratic Republic of Yemen] to transfer Soviet-made tanks and armored personnel vehicles to Ethiopia.

Later, after a new request from Ethiopia, the Soviet side made a decision additionally to supply Ethiopia with weapons and military equipment, and also with rifles for the People's militia in 1977-1980. In addition, we supply Ethiopia with technology for general civilian use, and Ethiopian servicemen have been accepted for study in the Soviet Union.

During the closed visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow in October 1977, the Soviet side agreed to provide urgently additional supplies of weapons and military equipment to strengthen the capability of Ethiopia to defend itself in the situation of the Somali aggression.

A group of Soviet military advisers and specialists currently works in Ethiopia.

A state delegation led by Army General V.I. Petrov has been staying in Ethiopia since November 1977 on a closed visit. The tasks of the delegation include devising measures jointly with the Ethiopian side to assist the PMAC in building the Ethiopian armed forces, for faster mastering of the Soviet military equipment by the Ethiopian army, and in the planning of military operations in the Ogaden and Eritrea.

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1175, ll. 24-32; translation by Svetlana Savran-

skaya.]

**Soviet Foreign Ministry and CPSU CC
International Department, Background
Report on the Somali-Ethiopian
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ABOUT THE SOMALIA-ETHIOPIA
CONFLICT
(Information Sheet)

Since the time of the formation of an independent Somalian state in 1960, there has been tension in inter-state relations on the Horn of Africa. Its source is the aspiration of the leadership of Somalia to unite the lands populated by Somali tribes in a single state and the claims it has made in that regard to certain regions of Ethiopia (Ogaden), Kenya, and the territory of the Republic of Djibouti.

Relations are particularly sharp between Somalia and Ethiopia. On multiple occasions border incidents and military conflict have broken out between them.

The revolution in Ethiopia in 1974 did not lead to an improvement in Somalia-Ethiopia relations. More to the point, President Siad and other Somali leaders, using as a cover demagogic declarations about the right of nations to self-determination, right up to secession, have intensified their pressure on Ethiopia. The Somalis in essence have demanded the partition of the multinational Ethiopian state on the basis of ethnicity. These demands were obviously aimed against the interests of the Ethiopian revolution and poured grist on the mill of internal and external reaction.

In these conditions the USSR and other socialist states undertook efforts to normalize relations between Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Somalia (SDR). In March 1977, at the initiative of Fidel Castro with the participation of the chairman of the Presidential Council of the PDRY S. Rubayi Ali, a meeting took place in Aden between the Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam and the President of the SDR Siad, which due to the unconstructive position of the latter ended without result.

The Soviet Union more than once appealed to the leadership of Somalia and

Ethiopia with a call to normalize their relations and proposed a constructive program which would lead to a settlement, and indicated its readiness to make available its good offices. In July-August 1977, in the course of separate meetings with representative of Somalia and Ethiopia who were visiting Moscow, it was found that the sides were occupying mutually-exclusive positions; moreover the Somalis were continuing to insist on wresting the Ogaden away from Ethiopia.

Insofar as plans to obtain the Ogaden without the application of force did not come to fruition, the Somali leadership, in which chauvinistic moods came to dominate, set about the practical realization of its expansionist plans, counting on achieving success in relation to the domestic political situation in Ethiopia, which was aggravated at that time. The Arab reaction also pushed them to this, and also imperialist states, in particular the USA, which, according to Siad's own admission, had promised to provide military assistance to Somalia.

On 23 July 1977, Somalia unleashed on the African Horn an armed conflict. Under cover of the Front for the Liberation of Western Somalia (FLWS)—which had been created by the Somali leadership itself—it sent its own forces into the Ogaden, and they occupied a significant part of the Ethiopian provinces of Harar, Bale, and Sidamo, and only through the bitter fights which unfolded in October-December 1977 were they stopped at the approaches to the important centers of Harar and Dire Dawa.

After appropriate preparation, the Ethiopian armed forces went on the counter-attack in February of this year. In the beginning of March of this year the strategically important city of Jijiga was liberated, and a major grouping of Somali forces was shattered. Cuban military personnel took part in the military actions, while Soviet military advisors participated in working out the plan of military operations. To the present, the liberation of all territory has in fact been completed, and Ethiopian troops have reached the border with Somalia. When the Somalis were on the edge of a military catastrophe, the leadership of the SDR made the decision to withdraw its forces from the Ogaden front. At the same time the representatives of the FLWS announced that they would not stop military actions on the territory of the Ogaden.

Confronted with the decisive refusal of the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist commonwealth to support the territorial claims on Ethiopia, the Somali leadership on 13 November 1977 unilaterally announced the annulment of the 1974 Soviet-Somali Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and demanded the recall from Somalia of all Soviet military and civilian advisors. In Somalia an anti-Soviet campaign was unfolded. Diplomatic relations with Cuba were cut off.

At the same time the Somali leadership began actively to search for support from Muslim states, winning from them assistance which included arms deliveries and the sending of forces for participation in combat actions against Ethiopia under the banner of "Islamic Solidarity." The visit of the President of Somalia, Said Barre, to Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, Oman, and also Iraq and Syria, at the end of December 1977—beginning of January 1978, served just such goals.

As the conflict went on, the Somali leaders many times called out to the USA and other Western powers with persistent appeals to provide assistance to Somalia and to interfere in events on the African Horn aimed at a "peace" settlement to the conflict and the "defense" of Somalia from aggression which allegedly was being prepared against it from the direction of Ethiopia.

Following the collapse of its adventure in Ogaden, Somalia has not retracted its territorial claims against Ethiopia, and putting forth various conditions it continues to seek these same goals by other means. The Somali leadership called on the great powers with an appeal to secure recognition and the realization of self-determination for the population of the Ogaden. In this regard it called on the great powers to undertake urgent measure to settle the conflict through negotiations, and by securing the withdrawal of "all foreign forces" from the African Horn, having in mind the Cuban military personnel and Soviet military advisors which had been invited by the Ethiopian government as a means to strengthen the defense capability of the country. Somalia also spoke out for sending "neutral forces" to the Ogaden.

The Ethiopian leadership evaluated the actions of Somalia as an act of armed aggression and in relation to this on 8 Sep-

tember 1977 broke off diplomatic relations with the SDR.

During the armed conflict, the PMAC expressed readiness to settle the conflict peacefully within the framework of the OAU, putting forth as an absolute condition the beginning of negotiations with the Somalis on the withdrawal of their forces from Ethiopian territory. Simultaneously the Ethiopian leaders declared many times in public speeches that Ethiopia did not intend, after the liberation of the Ogaden territory, to carry military actions beyond the limits of their own borders.

After the destruction of the Somali troops, the Ethiopia MFA asserted in its declaration on 12 March of this year the aspiration of the Ethiopian government to establish peace and stability on the African Horn in accord with the Charters and decisions of the U.N. and the OAU, on the basis of observation of the principles of non-use of force as a means of solving international arguments, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states. In the declaration it was further pointed out that the establishment of peace on the African Horn is possible only in the event of Somali retraction of its claims for part of the territory of Ethiopia and Kenya, and also Djibouti, [and] observation by it of international agreements. In it are rejected the attempts of the USA government and its allies to tie the withdrawal of Somali forces to a resolution of issues which fall under the sovereignty of Ethiopia (the presence on its territory of foreign military personnel invited there by the Ethiopian government, the proposal to send foreign observers to the Ogaden).

Regarding Somalia's demand that the population of the Ogaden be presented with the right of self-determination, the Ethiopian leadership declares that a resolution of that issue is a domestic affair of Ethiopia and that therefore it cannot be a condition for a settlement of the Somalia-Ethiopia conflict. The Ethiopian side also raises the issue of compensation from Somalia for the losses caused by the military actions in the Ogaden.

Somalia's position in the conflict with Ethiopia does not meet, as a rule, with support from the members of the OAU, who support the preservation of existing state borders in Africa.

The special committee of the OAU for settlement of Somalia-Ethiopia relations

(under the chairmanship of Nigeria), which met in session in Libreville [Gabon] in August 1977, refused to accept the Front for the Liberation of Western Somalia as a national-liberation movement, [and] called on the governments of both countries to stop hostile actions and to settle their disagreements by peaceful means, on the basis of the principle of the inviolability of the borders of African countries. In a resolution accepted by the the committee there was contained a call on everyone, particularly non-African countries, to refrain from interference in the conflict.

Efforts which have until now been undertaken by several African countries and the OAU to mediate an end to the conflict have not led to any positive results in view of the contradictory positions taken by the sides.

Over the course of the conflict, the reactionary Muslim regimes have taken a position in support of Somalia. However, according to information which we have, at the time of the conduct of military actions in the Ogaden, President Siad was not successful in getting their agreement to send their forces to that region, although Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and Egypt did covertly send arms to Somalia.

On the other hand, such Arab countries as the PDRY, Algeria, and, to an extent, Libya, provided support to Ethiopia. In this regard the PDRY sent weapons and military personnel to Ethiopia.

Over the course of the conflict, Sudan's position underwent change. For a variety of reasons it refused to take an extreme anti-Ethiopian course.

Leading Western countries, while verbally supporting a political settlement to the Somalia-Ethiopia conflict and stressing their own neutrality, in fact have tried to use the conflict to undermine the revolutionary regime in Ethiopia and to rout the progressive forces in Somalia, and also to weaken the presence of the USSR in that region of the world. In fact, the Westerners have conducted a policy of veiled assistance to Somalia. Nonetheless, for a variety of reasons they have not set out to provide Somalia with direct military assistance. Primarily they did not want to decisively push Ethiopia away from them, counting on reestablishing their positions here in the future. They also could not but take into account that the actions of Somalia had not met with support from Af-

rican states, but [in fact] Kenya, which has tight contacts with the West, sharply condemned them.

At the present time, from the side of the Westerners, particularly the USA, efforts are being undertaken to take into their own hands the initiative for a settlement of the conflict in the interests of strengthening their own positions on the African Horn. Under conditions of the occupation of the Ogaden by Somali forces they put forth proposals for a quick beginning to negotiations, so that the Somali side could speak at them from a position of strength. Another of their ideas which they put forth was to pass consideration of the issue of the conflict to the UN Security Council, where the Westerners counted on putting pressure on Ethiopia.

The decision of the SDR to withdraw Somali forces from the Ogaden was quickly used by the USA leadership for a declaration about the need for the quick withdrawal from Ethiopia of Soviet and Cuban military personnel. The Western powers also spoke in favor of the idea of sending to the Ogaden foreign "neutral observers" to supervise the withdrawal of troops from that region and to ensure the security of its population.

The Chinese leadership has expressed itself from an anti-Soviet position in relation to the conflict, trying to heap all the responsibility for the ongoing events on the Soviet Union. While not openly expressing its attitude to the conflict, at the same time it has essentially supported the position of Somalia. There is information that the PRC has delivered small arms to Somalia.

The countries of the socialist commonwealth have in relation to the conflict taken a position of censuring the aggressive actions of Somalia and providing Ethiopia with internationalist assistance and support.

Cuba acted particularly actively in this direction, sending, in response to a request from the government of Ethiopia and as officially announced by F. Castro on 16 March of this year, its own tank operators, artillery specialists, pilots, and also sub-units of mechanized infantry, to provide assistance to the armed forces of that country while the Ogaden was under conditions of occupation by Somali forces. During the Ethiopian counter-attack, Cuban soldiers were used in the main lines of attack. The Soviet Union and Cuba are in constant contact aimed at coordination of their actions in

support of the Ethiopian revolution.

The attitude of the Soviet Union toward the Somali-Ethiopia conflict is determined by the fact that that conflict contradicts the interests of progressive forces in that region, and creates a danger of turning the African Horn into a hotbed of serious international tension.

After the outbreak of armed conflict on the African Horn, the Soviet Union came out in favor of its quick cessation, for the peaceful settlement of relations between Somalia and Ethiopia by means of negotiations on the basis of mutual respect by the sides of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, noting that an absolute condition of such a settlement must be a cessation of military actions and a quick and unconditional withdrawal of Somali forces from the territory of Ethiopia, and that otherwise a situation analogous to the one in the Middle East might arise on the African Horn.

Our principled line in relation to the situation on the Horn of Africa was precisely expressed in the speeches of comrades L.I. Brezhnev of 28 September 1977 on the occasion of the visit to the USSR of the President of the People's Republic of Angola A. Neto, and A.N. Kosygin of 12 January 1978 on the occasion of the visit to the USSR of the President of the APDR [Algerian People's Democratic Republic] H. Boumedienne, and also in the TASS Declaration of 18 January 1978.

The Soviet Union spoke out against efforts of the Western states to submit the issue of the situation on the African Horn for consideration by the UN Security Council, which they could use in particular to unleash a hostile campaign against the USSR and Cuba. At the same time the Soviet Union believes that the Organization of African Unity should continue its efforts to provide assistance on a settlement of the Somali-Ethiopia conflict, insofar as it has not exhausted its possibilities in this area.

The position of the Soviet Union towards the Somali-Ethiopia conflict has many times been brought to the attention of the leadership of progressive African and Arab states, and also to a range of Western powers.

The Soviet Union consistently follows a firm line in providing the utmost assistance and support to the revolutionary Ethio-

pian regime. During the conflict, supplementary, urgent measures were undertaken to strengthen the defense capability of Ethiopia, which had become a victim of aggression. We brought deliveries of combat materiel, weapons, and ammunition to Somalia to a halt. After the Somali side undertook unfriendly actions in November 1977, the Soviet Union stopped economic and trade cooperation and ended military cooperation with Somalia.

In the beginning of March of this year President Said appealed to the Soviet Union with a request to provide mediatory services to settle the Somali-Ethiopia conflict and expressed readiness to establish friendly relations between Somalia and the USSR.

From our side agreement was given to implement mediatory efforts if the leadership of Ethiopia would view that favorably and in the event that Somalia took a realistic position on a settlement of the conflict. In this regard Siad's attention was drawn to the fact that the various preconditions put forth by the Somali side (giving self-determination to the population of Ogaden) only delay the possibility of holding negotiations to bring an end to the conflict, insofar as they cannot be acceptable to any sovereign state and complicate the realization by us of mediatory efforts.

As far as the establishment of friendly relations with Somalia is concerned, from our side there was expressed readiness for that in principle and under the clear understanding of the fact that Somalia will take specific steps to establish a genuine peace on the African Horn.

In response to our information about Siad's proposal, the Ethiopian government, having expressed doubt about the sincerity of the intentions of the Somali leadership, at the same time expressed readiness to begin negotiations with Somalia in Moscow with the participation of the Soviet Union, on the condition that the Somali representatives are prepared to declare in due course the rejection of their anti-Ethiopian, anti-Soviet, and anti-Cuban positions; to declare respect for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and to give agreement to the demarcation of the Ethiopia-Somalia border on the basis of existing international agreements; to stop their support of underground movements directed against the territorial integrity and unity of Ethiopia; and lastly, in some way or another to inform public opinion of

their own country and world public opinion about Somalia's new position.

So far the Somali leadership rejects these proposals and continues to insist on its own conditions.

The outcome of the war in the Ogaden essentially was reflected in the domestic political situation of its participants. The situation in Somalia was sharply exacerbated. On the grounds of a worsening of the economic situation and a decline in the standard of living, dissatisfaction with the current leadership grew among various strata of the population, including the army. This dissatisfaction, which has assumed open forms, is being suppressed by Said with the help of executions and repressions. In Ethiopia the military victory facilitated, on the one hand, the consolidation of the patriotic, progressive forces, and the strengthening of the position of Mengistu and his supporters, and, on the other hand, enlivened nationalistic elements, including in the leadership of the country, which are putting forth the idea that the Somali threat should be "done away with" once and for all.

Overall, the situation on the African Horn remains complex and tense. The cessation of military actions on the ground has not yet been ratified in any way, and the continuing Somali claims to the Ogaden, and [to] part of the territory of Kenya and the Republic of Djibouti, create a situation fraught with the outbreak of a new armed confrontation. Such a situation creates an opportunity for maneuvers of imperialist and reactionary Arab circles in this region of Africa, and therefore the establishment there of peace and the achievement of an agreement between Somalia and Ethiopia on stopping the conflict corresponds to our interests.

Third African Department
MFA USSR

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1175, ll. 13-23; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]

SED Archives, Memorandum on Soviet Reaction to Libyan Proposal on Somali-Ethiopian Conflict, 4 April 1978

The Soviet Ambassador in Tripoli received instruction to communicate the following to [Libyan Prime Minister Abdul

Salam] Jalloud:

The proposals of the Libyan leadership on the settlement of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict have been carefully examined in Moscow. We have communicated to the Ethiopians the recent Libyan desire to receive in Tripoli the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), based on the fact that only the Ethiopian side itself can make a decision in this respect. The Ethiopian side had previously communicated to us that Mengistu could not come to Libya at the end of February for negotiations with Siad Barre, for reasons which the PMAC chairman told you personally.

The Libyan side is aware of the Soviet position with respect to the procedure for a political settlement in the area of the Horn of Africa. We have fully explained our point of view during your recent visit to Moscow. There is only one just basis for the settlement of the conflict - this is the mutual respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in domestic matters of the other side. All attempts to achieve a political settlement on any other basis were bound to destabilize such a solution and burden it with new difficulties.

The withdrawal of Somali troops from the Ogaden is only a step in the right direction, conditioned by the existing situation. The conditions for a settlement as officially announced by the Somali leadership, in our opinion, only served to postpone the start of negotiations. These conditions, as is known, touch upon the sovereign rights of Ethiopia and upon problems which lie in its domestic realm. The solution of the national question in the Ogaden belongs to this.

One cannot disregard the fact that the USA and other Western powers, which verbally favor a settlement of the conflict at the Horn of Africa, in fact seek to make such a settlement more difficult in order to strengthen their position in this area.

In our opinion the main task now is to put the settlement of the conflict at the Horn of Africa on the tracks of peaceful negotiations. The solution of this problem can not depend on whether Ethiopia and Somalia can achieve agreement on all other problems in their relationship. It is now especially important to influence the Somali leadership to assume a constructive position and to avoid giving the imperialist and other reactionary forces the opportunity to exploit

Somalia for their designs.

With respect to the situation in Eritrea, the Soviet Union has viewed and still views this in conformity with the UN and OAU resolutions as an internal Ethiopian matter. We favor a political solution of this question by negotiations between the central government and the Eritrean organizations. It is our strong conviction that the current attitude of the Eritrean organizations which favor the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia contradicts the interests of the Ethiopian Revolution and the progressive forces in this area and is only of advantage to the imperialists and the reaction.

Libya and other progressive Arab states can use their authority and influence to convince the Eritrean organizations to terminate the fighting and go the way of a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem in the framework of a unified Ethiopian state.

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

SED official Hermann Axen to E. Honecker, 18 April 1978, enclosing Draft Letter from Honecker to Brezhnev on Ethiopian-Eritrean Talks, 19 April 1978

Enclosure: Honecker to Brezhnev, 19 April 1978

Esteemed Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev!

On 23 March 1978, the second meeting between the representatives to the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Socialist Ethiopia and the Eritrean Liberation Front took place. Upon request by the Politburo of the CC of the SED, Comrade Hermann Axen, member of the Politburo and CC secretary, participated in the talks.

[Berhanu Bayeh and Aforki declared again their desire to terminate the bloodshed and to do everything to solve the Eritrean problem by peaceful means.]

Despite this declaration made by both negotiators, the political negotiations showed that the positions on both sides had become stiffer.

The representative of the Provisional Military Administrative Council was inclined to favor a predominantly military solution of the Eritrean problem. They did not make any concrete or constructive pro-

posals for a peaceful and political solution although Comrade Werner Lamberz had agreed with Mengistu Haile Mariam on working papers in December 1977.

The attitude of the representatives of the Eritrean Liberation Movement illustrated, on the other hand that, under the pressure by the leadership of the Sudan and the Arab reaction, there has been a strengthening of nationalist, openly separatist forces within the Eritrean movements, especially by means of the coordination between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Eritrean Liberation Front (Revolutionary Council).

The leader of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, Aforki, presented the demand for a separate Eritrean state in even harsher terms. Only after long sharp discussion was he willing to agree to this second meeting and to the further examination of the proposals made by the SED. Thus it was possible to hold the second meeting. In the course of the meeting, the representatives of the Ethiopian leadership and the EPLF reiterated their known positions. They accepted the SED proposal - this proposal was, as is well known, agreed to by the CC of the CPSU - to put the following four points before the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Central Committee of the EPLF as recommendations for a settlement:

1. Both sides confirm their resolve to stop the bloodshed immediately and bring about a political solution.

2. The Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia will make a public declaration expressing its concrete proposals for the implementation of regional autonomy for Eritrea in the framework of the Ethiopian state and under inclusion of all willing positive forces in Eritrea.

The Central Committee of the EPLF recognizes the achievements of the Ethiopian Revolution and declares itself ready for cooperation in the interest of implementation of regional autonomy.

3. Revolutionary Ethiopia's secure access to the Red Sea must be guaranteed by its uninterrupted access lines and its control over Asmara and the ports of Massawa and Assab.

4. Both sides form a common commission for the purpose of implementing the above points and all other steps for the security of the Revolution in Ethiopia and re-

gional autonomy in Eritrea.

It was agreed to inform the leadership organizations of Ethiopia and of the EPLF and have them communicate their positions on the results of the second meeting and the proposals of the SED at a third meeting in the GDR in mid-May.

Thus the second meeting undermined all attempts by the representatives of the EPLF to break off all political contacts and negotiations with the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia [as they had previously intended to do].

But the situation involves the acute danger that the fighting over Eritrea will escalate and that the Arab reaction and the imperialists will intervene even further and attempt to internationalize the conflict. This would severely endanger the revolutionary developments in Ethiopia.

The Politburo of the CC of the SED is of the opinion that everything has to be done to achieve a political solution of the Eritrean question. The safeguarding of the revolutionary process in Ethiopia and its territorial as well as political integrity is a necessary precondition for this. The Provisional Military Administrative Council must doubtless have reliable control over its free access to the Red Sea. This, however, must be safeguarded by political and military means. It is our impression following the recent meeting that the Provisional Military Administrative Council is only oriented towards the military tasks in this matter and, despite repeated verbal assurances, has not made any concrete political steps in winning over the Eritrean population for the implementation of regional autonomy.

We therefore think that the Provisional Military Administrative Council should without further delay address an appeal to all willing forces in Eritrea for the peaceful political solution of the Eritrean problem. It would have to render more precisely the proposals it has made so far by concrete suggestions on the implementation of the right for self-determination of the different nations within Ethiopia in order to speed up the process of differentiation within the Eritrean population and to isolate the reactionary, separatist forces in Eritrea.

Based on the results of the last meeting, the Politburo of our Party proposes therefore that the Soviet comrades, in conjunction with representatives of our Party, work out internally possible solutions to the

regional autonomy of Eritrea in the framework of the Ethiopian state in order to communicate them at the appropriate time to the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, Mengistu Haile Mariam.

[Closing remarks]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Memorandum of Conversation between [SED] Comrade Friedel Trappen and Soviet Comrade R. A. Ulyanovsky in the CC of the CPSU, 11 May 1978

[Other participants]

Ulyanovsky:

As Comrade B.N. Ponomarev has already pointed out in the last conversation with the comrades of the SED, the CC of the CPSU considers the talks of the SED with the Eritrean movements and the Ethiopian side very useful and positive. We can still say this today. On this basis one should approach the next meeting in June as well as other meetings. We consider the four points agreed on at the last meeting as positive. If both sides really take the four points as a starting point, this would be positive for further development. We are of the opinion that the following main points should be emphasized:

- a) The political solution of the problem and an end to the bloodshed.
- b) The granting of regional autonomy for Eritrea, but, however, no separate national independence.
- c) The unconditional use of Ethiopia's communications with the ports on the Red Sea.
- d) The increased unification of the progressive forces on both sides.

This would be a deeply satisfying platform which could be developed further.

The points agreed upon in the March meeting are contained in these proposals and hence could be developed further at the June meeting. This would create a real foundation for the rapprochement of both sides. The main question is, how honestly, how genuinely, and how deeply both sides will comply with these points. If one could say today that the four points are fulfilled by both sides or will soon be fulfilled, this would be a great relief for us.

The CPSU also works in this direction. It agreed to receive an ELF-RC delegation led by Ahmed Mohammed Nasser at the level of the USSR Solidarity Committee on a confidential internal basis around 20 May 1978. We will use these contacts in order to induce the representatives of the ELF-RC to have direct contact with the Provisional Military Administrative Council. The objective is to find an appropriate solution for Eritrea within the framework of the Ethiopian state. We do not have the intention to hide from Ahmed Nasser our policy toward a unified Ethiopia. The policy of the CPSU is aimed at the unity of Ethiopia. We will try to convince Ahmed Nasser that the future development of the Eritrean people can only evolve in a unified Ethiopian state. In the discussions we will continue to pursue the line of emphasizing the unity between the Marxist-Leninist forces and national-democratic forces in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

We would like to stress that we have to be extremely tactful in our relations with Mengistu Haile Mariam and the PMAC, in particular with respect to the Eritrean question.

Mengistu Haile Mariam does not have an easy stand within the PMAC in this regard. In connection with the well-known Dr. Negede [Gobeze] affair tensions have heightened within the PMAC and this has not made Mengistu's task any easier.

We would like to emphasize that all concrete initiatives on the Eritrean questions have to originate from Ethiopia. This does not mean that the Eritrean side is free of any initiatives. If we put the entire weight on the Mengistu Haile Mariam's shoulders and free Ahmed Nasser or respectively Aforki of any responsibility, this would be one-sided. The Ethiopian side is watching with great jealousy the actions of the CPSU and the SED. Here as well one has to see the connection between Mengistu Haile Mariam's position and the people around him. Mengistu Haile Mariam deserves to be regarded by us as a man who represents internationalist positions. By contrast to him, Berhanu Bayeh and Fikre Selassie as well as Legesse Asfaw and others, for example, are marked by nationalism although they are faithful to Mengistu Haile Mariam.

All steps and initiatives on the part of the CPSU, the CP Cuba, and the SED must be put forward extremely tactfully and carefully not to cause any protests. Frankly, the

problem lies to a certain degree in the fact that we all attempt to square the circle. The one side of the problem is - and we are both working on this - to solve the problem on an internationalist basis. On the other hand there are efforts to solve it on a nationalist basis. This is precisely why, I emphasize again, we have to apply maximum caution, circumspection, and tactfulness towards Mengistu Haile Mariam so that the nationalists will not grasp him by the throat.

In our contacts and talks with Ahmed Nasser we intend to make it unmistakably clear to him that it is necessary that all revolutionary forces join together and that the Eritrean problem is not only a national but above all a class problem which has to be solved by the common fight against the imperialists and the Arab reaction.

Efforts to split up Ethiopia and create a separate Eritrean state, to refuse to give Ethiopia access to the ports on the Red Sea, to drive the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries out of this region, are not simply a national problem but a problem of international class warfare, not to speak of the fact that such a separate state would be manipulated by the Sudan and Saudi Arabia and their petrol dollars.

We will therefore point out to Ahmed Nasser, who claims to be a Marxist, the national and international dimension of the Eritrean problem.

Concerning the questions put forward by Comrade Trappen I would like to add the following consideration:

The basic difficulty is the fact that separatist ideas have been rooted in Eritrea for a long time. These ideas are very popular among the population, especially among the workers. This factor, the factor of the erring of the masses based on nationalism, is a given one. The main difficulty therefore is that the mass of the Eritrean population does not understand the difference between the imperial regime of Haile Selassie and the policy of the PMAC.

The fight continues as in earlier times under the imperial regime. This creates the great necessity for intensified political work by the PMAC and above all by Mengistu Haile Mariam towards the Eritrean population. It was particularly this point that Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev discussed with Mengistu Haile Mariam during his trip to Moscow.

The PMAC is confronting a decisive,

great, and huge task to get the people of Eritrea on the side of the Ethiopian Revolution. Preparations have been made but no concrete steps and measures. The Soviet comrades have told Mengistu Haile Mariam and Legesse that it was now important to show the Eritrean people that the PMAC is not identical with the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie and the interests of the Ethiopian Revolution are in harmony with the interests of the progressive forces in Eritrea. Unfortunately, forces in the PMAC and Mengistu Haile Mariam himself have caused a slow-down of this necessary political work towards the people of Eritrea. Mengistu Haile Mariam is passive.

We completely agree with the estimate that military actions for the solution of the Eritrean question alone are pointless and, moreover, dangerous. They would widen the gap between the Eritrean people and the Ethiopian Revolution and create new intensified hatred. This does not mean that the PMAC should completely abandon military activities. We think that it is necessary to exert military pressure on the Eritrean separatist forces. This especially since in regard to military matters the current situation in Eritrea is not favorable for the PMAC. It is therefore necessary to talk but at the same time to act militarily on the part of the PMAC. This applies in particular to the safeguarding of important military strategic positions and especially of the communications with the ports of Massawa and Assab as well as the capital Asmara, the cities Akordat, Keren, and Barentu. These military actions have to serve political measures.

It was emphasized in the talk between Comrade L.I. Brezhnev and Mengistu Haile Mariam that it is necessary for the PMAC to address itself to the Eritrean people. This political initiative is extremely acute today as never before. We deem it necessary that both the CPSU and the SED together exert influence on Mengistu Haile Mariam in this respect. We have to take into consideration that the position of the Eritrean movements has not become any less obstinate, because they still demand the separation of Eritrea. This shows that there are no honest efforts for a political solution on the part of the Eritrean representatives. Therefore it is correct to work for a change in the current position of the Eritrean movements. It is especially necessary to receive from them a declaration pledging that self-determination for

the Eritrean people will be achieved within the framework of a Ethiopian state. We received an information [report] in early May according to which direct contacts had been established between the PMAC and the EPLF. We do not know anything about the substance of these contacts. With respect to the concrete question whether it makes sense to continue the negotiations or to await military actions, Comrade Ulyanovsky stated that both sides had to be induced to [take part in] further negotiations and that at the same time a certain limited military pressure was quite useful, meaning that even with the continuation of the negotiation efforts certain military actions could not be precluded.

Concerning the question on the concrete coordination between the CPSU, the SED, and the Cuban CP, Comrade Ulyanovsky emphasized that all bilateral contacts with the Cuban CP are excellent and that the same applied to the SED. There has been no exchange of opinion with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen on the part of the CPSU. They have, as is well known, pulled their troops out of Ethiopia. One has to take into consideration that the situation in the PDR Yemen is difficult. The PDR Yemen has to be protected.

Comrade Ulyanovsky agreed to put the proposal for the creation of a mechanism for consultation and coordination before the leadership of the CPSU. Concerning the question of a possible later public announcement of our parties on the Eritrean question (in some form), it is expedient to examine this in the light of the Moscow talks with Ahmed Nasser and the planned third meeting of the Ethiopian and Eritrean sides with the SED.

With respect to the question of expert consultations on variants of a solution, it is possible at any time for GDR scientists [specialists] to consult with Soviet comrades about concrete questions. Comrade Ulyanovsky thinks that at this point these contacts should be limited to the level of the International Relations Departments of the Central Committees. With respect to the involvement of CPSU experts in the consultation and negotiations at the third meeting, Comrade Ulyanovsky stated that he would put this question before the party leadership for decision. Concerning the guarantees called for by the Eritrean side, one can only get more precise on this point

after concrete results have been achieved on the question of what, who, and to whom in some matter guarantees might be given.

Finally, Comrade Ulyanovsky pointed out that the attempt to keep the Ethiopian leadership from its military advance through us was a very delicate matter. The PMAC was predominantly of the opinion that even a political solution of the Eritrean question was not possible without a strengthening of Ethiopia's military positions in Eritrea and that the liberation of above-mentioned ports and cities can only be achieved by military means. The PMAC assumed that only then [would] actual and basic conditions exist for negotiations with the separatists.[...]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

SED Department of International Relations, Information on talks of Ahmed Nasser (ELF-RC) in the USSR Solidarity Committee, 7- 8 June 1978

We received the following information from the CC of the CPSU:

The representatives of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity explained the USSR position which is based on the assumption that the solution of the Eritrean question has to be achieved within the framework of a unified Ethiopian state by means of negotiations.

In effect, the three talks which were held with Ahmed Nasser proved that the Eritrean friends are not yet willing to approach the question by giving up the slogan of independence for Eritrea. Their argumentation is that neither side should coerce the other one into negotiations and a solution could only be a result of unconditional negotiations.

In the first conversation on 7 June, A. Nasser indicated that the ELF-RC would possibly consent to a federation. In the following talks it was not mentioned again, and by the time the third talk took place on 8 June, the position of the Eritrean friends had even hardened.

Generally they were at pains to prove that the ELF was the best, the [most] Marxist-Leninist of the Eritrean movements. They pointed out their advantages as follows:

1. The ELF recognizes the progressive

character of the Ethiopian Revolution.

2. It acknowledges the importance of the Soviet-Cuban support.

3. It does not demand preconditions.

4. It is willing to negotiate.

5. It favors the unification on a common democratic basis.

The Soviet comrades estimate that the attitude of the ELF appears to be slightly more flexible as those of the other Eritrean movements but this is, however, only an appearance.

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Winkelmann, SED CC Department of International Relations, to Hermann Axen, 9 June 1978

[Introductory remarks]

Comrade Ponomarev is sending cordial greetings to you. In his opinion, Mengistu's recent speech does not allow for any [new] conclusions with respect to the [Ethiopian-Eritrean] talks in Berlin. Everything should be done as agreed upon. Even after this speech there is no reason for any nervousness.

Comrade Ponomarev had a long talk with Comrade Valdez Vivo on 9 June in which he also had an exchange of views about Mengistu's recent speech. The speech is considered as mostly positive. It corresponds for the most part with the recommendations of the Soviet and Cuban comrades with respect to the current situation and the necessary measures. It is in harmony with the agreements which have been made with Mengistu.

Mengistu's speech, which contains the necessary elements for a peaceful solution of the problem, is the basis for the further work. Mengistu will travel in the next days to Asmara. It is planned to hold a meeting with the population in which Mengistu will explain his program for a peaceful solution. His recent speech is the prelude to this action.

[Concluding remarks.]

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

GDR Embassy in Moscow, 19 June

1978, Memorandum of a Conversation between [SED] Comrade Grabowski and the Head of the Third African Department of the [Soviet] MFA, [CPSU] Comrade Sinitsin

On Mengistu's speech of 14 June

The speech contains statements which can hardly be read without concern. One still has to assume that the military actions of the separatists have to be energetically opposed, that full and effective control by the PMAC and the Ethiopian armed forces over the cities in the north of the country and their access lines has to be assured. But obviously this was not everything that the speech meant to convey. Intentions for a complete military solution of the Eritrean problem shine through. One cannot recognize any new constructive or concrete suggestions on how to proceed politically. But this is exactly what would be necessary in the current situation and in the context of corresponding necessary military actions.

Obviously those forces within the Ethiopian leadership which have always favored a one-sided military solution have gained ground. It also seems important that there is heightened concern about the possibility of a new delay of a solution of the problem contributing to a renewed destabilization of the revolutionary regime.

On Ethiopia's international situation

The predominant majority of Arab states is increasingly moving against Ethiopia. One should under no circumstances underestimate the danger involved in the clash between the positions of the reactionary and progressive Arab regimes in the Eritrean question which is heightened by the present policy of the Ethiopian leadership. Basically, only the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen is granting real support for the Ethiopian Revolution. Algeria is acting in a very reserved way: while acknowledging the achievements of the Ethiopian Revolution, it does hardly anything concrete in support. Syria and Iraq have clearly expressed once more in recent days that they intend to give support to the [Eritrean] separatists, including military supplies. The Iraqi leadership is also interested in strengthening in every way the pro-Baathistic elements in Eritrea. The Libyan position is quite unclear. Even though they rhetorically recognize the achievements of the Ethiopian Revolution, they, however, less and less ex-

PLICITLY oppose the separation of Eritrea. The impression that the Libyan leadership basically favors the Arabization of Eritrea is not far off. In no case does it want to see relations among the Arab states, especially among the countries of the rejection front, be burdened by the Eritrean question. The pressure exerted by Saudi Arabia and Egypt can definitely be felt. It is difficult to say whether Arab countries will be willing to deploy troop contingents in Eritrea against Ethiopia. They will undoubtedly take into consideration that the predominant majority of African countries would oppose such a move. In their view, Eritrea is a part of Ethiopia. A separation of Eritrea would run counter to their national interest as strong separatist movements exert de-stabilizing influence in many African countries.

It is remarkable that similar considerations make even [Sudanese President Jafaar Al-] Numeiri waver. His attitude toward Ethiopia has become more careful, despite pressure from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Besides the Southern problem, several other questions (refugees from Eritrea, interest in the use of the Nile) impel him to keep up somewhat normal relations with Ethiopia.

The African countries are in principle opposed to a change of borders. In this question the progressive [countries] and those countries which are largely dependent on the West coincide in their views, though the latter fear the revolutionary changes in Ethiopia. The common danger has even led to a rapprochement between Ethiopia and Kenya. Kenya appears more aggressive and positive [in this question] than some progressive African states. Tanzania's attitude has a very positive effect as it consistently and convincingly opposes the separation of Eritrea. Nigeria, which is under strong pressure by the USA and in which the OAU has, as is well known, much influence, already showed itself to be wavering during the aggression by Somalia. Guinea, which has recently repeatedly pointed out the war of national liberation by the Eritrean people, gives Ethiopia more headaches than support.

In sum it can be said that the OAU does not want to allow for a confrontation and is looking for ways to confirm the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity. How little consistent and passive the OAU is, is proved by the fact that Ethiopia has received little support and that - due to the fear of a possible split - even Somalia's ag-

gression was not condemned.

Nevertheless, an intervention by the Arab countries in Eritrea should run into considerable opposition within the OAU. This is in part the effect of the still deeply rooted traditional fear and resistance of the African states against Arab expansionism. At the same time, none of the African countries seriously wants to endanger its relations with the Arab states. This altogether very passive and inconsistent attitude of many African countries and of the OAU was not an unimportant factor which led the Ethiopian leadership to recognize that in practice only the Socialist countries are Ethiopia's real and principal allies.

Among the imperialist countries, one has to pay particular attention to the efforts and activities of the USA, Italy, and France. Their situation in Ethiopia and also with respect to the Eritrean question is quite delicate. All imperialist countries, of course, are interested in the elimination of the Revolutionary achievements in Ethiopia and in the establishment of a pro-Western regime. They are putting all their efforts toward this goal. The NATO countries, led by the USA, base their efforts on the sober assumption that a frontal attack would hardly help to achieve their goals, would only foster the basic anti-imperialist mood of the Ethiopian people and its leadership and drive Ethiopia even closer into the hands of the Socialist community of states. The USA in no case wants to burn all its bridges to Ethiopia. To the best of their abilities, they want to destabilize the situation in Ethiopia and the revolutionary regime, and undermine and subvert the revolutionary development in Ethiopia. The imperialists aspire to take advantage of ethnic conflicts, exploit the social instability of the leadership, and encourage nationalist feelings in an effort to further stiffen the Ethiopian attitude in the Eritrean question and thereby aggravate the situation of the revolutionary regime. One also has to take quite seriously the skillful attempts, in particular by the USA, to launch such arguments as "why should the solution of the Eritrean problem be done only by way of cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries," "a certain cooperation with the USA and the West could certainly be useful," "the USA after all have considerable possibilities in effectively influencing Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab countries," "the West has to offer quite

constructive solutions." It is remarkable that Ahmed Nasser has pointed to this question during his talks with the Soviet comrades in Moscow. The Soviet comrades, however, have no indication that these advances are actually effective. One has to assume that the USA would prefer a unified, reactionary Ethiopia to a divided Ethiopia. By using the unity slogan, they are trying to activate those reactionary and nationalist forces, which no doubt still exist, against the revolutionary regime.

Considering all these aspects it is not surprising that the USA, Italy, and France have officially opposed Eritrean separatism. It is also symptomatic that the United States is making obtrusive efforts to prove that it was they who recommended to Siad Barre to withdraw his troops from Ethiopia. The cautious handling of aid to Somalia also shows that the USA on no account intend to keep their relations with Ethiopia - in the long run - strained. The USA and China are using Somalia and the provocative actions by Somalia against Ethiopia - which are above all intended to have a de-stabilizing effect—more for anti-Soviet than anti-Ethiopian purposes. They understand that support of the Eritrean separatists would also be directed against the reactionary forces in Ethiopia.

With respect to Somalis, the USA are intent on establishing a foothold and bringing the leadership of the country under their firm control. In this regard attention has to be paid to the fact that they also do not consider Barre a solid partner. They assume that he would deceive even the West. Nevertheless, it is to be expected that Barre will soon make a trip to the USA. He wants to gain military support in the amount of \$1 billion. There are indications that the USA is willing to give \$50 million.

With respect to similar "military abstention" by China, without doubt other motives play a role: the Chinese leadership does obviously not consider it opportune to display its military weakness in public - and especially in such a burning spot of international politics. Light arms are less revealing, yet they will not allow Somalia to wage a large war against Ethiopia. In addition, China does not want to strain its relations with Africa any further.

With respect to the domestic situation in Somalia, one has to first emphasize that Barre is continuing to exploit nationalist slo-

gans and considerable tribal feuds to eliminate progressive elements from the state and party apparatus and to replace them with people faithful to him. This is facilitated by the fact that the party is without a broad social basis and in practice was organized by Barre from above. Barre is careful not to expound a pro-Western course. He has to acknowledge that the progressive development in the past cannot simply be crossed out. The country still has sufficiently powerful progressive forces which for now are silent. He thus prefers to leave many things outwardly as they have been. Officially, the program and the organization of the party are retained. The party organization is even being activated.

[Signed] Grabowski.

[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

Minutes of Meeting of CPSU CC Politburo, 14 July 1978 (excerpt)

MEETING OF THE
CC CPSU POLITBURO
14 July 1978

Chaired by Com. KIRILENKO, A.P.

Attended by Coms. Andropov, Iu.V., Kulakov, F.D., Mazurov, K.T., Demichev, P.N., Kuznetsov, V.V., Ponomarev, B.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Chernenko, K.Y., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Riabov, Ia.P., Rusakov, K.V

[...] 9. About Measures for the Future Strengthening of Soviet-Ethiopian Relations

KIRILENKO. Coms. Gromyko, Andropov, and Ponomarev have presented this issue.

MAL'TSEV says that the Ethiopians are behaving incorrectly in Eritrea. They are campaigning against providing autonomy to Eritrea. They have begun military actions there. There are not conducting an entirely correct policy in the Ogaden either. Military actions are taking place somewhere there against Somalia.

KIRILENKO. Mengistu is still not sufficiently experienced, but at the same time he is a very sensitive person, therefore it is just necessary to educate him, to teach

him.

ANDROPOV. It is in the same way important to show Mengistu that we are on his side.

PONOMAREV. Yesterday the Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba, Vivo Valdez visited me. He had been in Ethiopia. In Cuba he received instructions. He is returning there. Vivo said that Cuba will not undertake to do anything in Ethiopia without the preliminary agreement with the Soviet Union.

In relation to the fact that our Ambassador in Ethiopia Com. Ratanov has taken ill, and has been in Moscow for three months already, it is apparently necessary to think about sending another comrade there.

ANDROPOV. Ambassador to Ethiopia Com. Ratanov has already gotten better, he can go. But overall it evidently makes sense for the MFA to think about a new ambassador.

KIRILENKO. I think that, you, Com. Mal'tsev, will take measures now to send there one of the comrades, say, an advisor, the most experienced, who could help Com. Ratanov.

The draft of the resolution is accepted.

[Source: APRF, f. 3, op. 120, d. 40, ll. 45, 10-12; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]

**CPSU CC Politburo Decision,
14 July 1978**

Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

TOP SECRET

No. P112/IX

To Comrades: Brezhnev, Kosygin, Andropov, Gromyko, Kirilenko, Mazurov, Suslov, Ponomarev, Rusakov, Arkhipov, Katushev, Baibakov, Martynov, Zolotukhin, Patolichev, Skachkov, Garbuzov, Smirtiukov.

Extract from protocol No. 112 of the CC CPSU Politburo session of 14 July 1978

About measures for the future strengthening of Soviet-Ethiopian relations

1. Agree with the thoughts contained in the note of the MFA USSR, the International department, CC CPSU, and KGB

USSR of 11 July 1978 (attached).

2. Affirm the draft of instructions to the Soviet ambassador in Addis-Ababa (attached)

3. Assign Gosplan USSR, Gossnab USSR, [Minzag] USSR, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the KGB USSR, and the GKES to review the request of the Ethiopian side and within three weeks in the prescribed manner to submit corresponding proposals, including one about providing assistance to Ethiopia in relation to the drought and one about a delay in payment for the general civilian goods which were delivered for the Ethiopian army.

Assign the appropriate agencies and organizations to confirm the progress made in fulfilling the obligations of the Soviet side on agreements and contracts that were concluded. Accelerate the realization of achieved agreements with the government of Ethiopia regarding the creation of Soviet-Ethiopian commission on economic cooperation.

Assign the permanent Soviet representative at the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance to present ideas regarding the provision by the members of the CMEA of assistance to the economic development of Ethiopia on a multilateral basis.

CC CPSU SECRETARY

[attachment]

Re: Point IX Prot. No. 112

Secret

CC CPSU

According to the communication from the Soviet Ambassador in Addis-Ababa, and also according to the information from the Cuban friends, facts are taking place which bear witness to manifestations of nationalistic moods among certain parts of the Ethiopian leadership following the victory over Somalia in the Ogaden, which already is beginning to exert a negative influence on Ethiopia's relations with several countries of the Socialist community (spec. No. 695 of 6/30/78). From the Ethiopian side, in particular, a certain dissatisfaction is being expressed regarding the progress of cooperation with these countries above all in the economic area, complaints connected with the development of trade-economic relations, not always grounded in fact, are be-

ing put forth. This type of mood in one way or another shows up in the approach of the Ethiopian leadership to a resolution of the Eritrean issue.

The MFA USSR, the CC CPSU International Department, and the KGB USSR consider it expedient to implement a range of steps from our side in order to neutralize these types of moods in the Ethiopian leadership. It would make sense to assign the Soviet ambassador in Addis-Ababa to have a conversation with the chairman of the PMAC, during which in an open and friendly way opinions would be exchanged about the future development of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, stressing the immutability of the policy of the Soviet Union of multi-sided support and assistance to the Ethiopian revolution.

Taking into account the conversation with Mengistu it would be possible to review the issue of conducting a comradely exchange of opinions with the leadership of Cuba and the GDR about the current situation in Ethiopia.

Assign the corresponding Soviet agencies to carefully review the requests of the Ethiopian side vis-a-vis economic issues, and to submit proposals aimed at improving Soviet-Ethiopian economic cooperation.

Please review.

A. Gromyko Iu. Andropov B. Ponomarev

11 July 1978

[Source: APRF, f. 3, op. 91, d. 272, ll. 140-143; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]

Soviet Embassy in Ethiopia, background report on "Ethiopia's Relations with Western Countries," August 1978

USSR EMBASSY TO
SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

Re: no 275
14 August 1978

ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS WITH
WESTERN COUNTRIES
(Information)

Before the revolution, Ethiopia was primarily oriented toward the Western countries, first and foremost toward the USA and the countries of the "Common market" (Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, England,

France). This determined the external policies of the country, although formally Ethiopia belonged to the nonaligned countries.

The connection of Ethiopia's economy and trade as well as its defense to the capitalist governments was a key factor in the influence of the Western countries on Ethiopia. Until the revolution in 1974 developed capitalist countries occupied the predominant position in the external trade activity of Ethiopia. Thus, for example, in 1973, they represented approximately 70% of the volume of external trade (by comparison with 3% for the group of socialist countries).

Military supplies were completely dependent on the United States.

Meanwhile, the West took into consideration first and foremost the significant strategic position of Ethiopia in the region of the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, and Africa as a whole in terms of a confrontation with the USSR, and likewise the visible situation of the country on the continent in political terms.

At the same time, even during the imperial regime, between various Western countries and, first and foremost, between the USA and the "Common market," there was a contradiction with regard to Ethiopia in the area of the economy and, to a certain degree, in the area of policy. The countries of the "Common market" were dissatisfied with the dominant position of the USA in Ethiopia. From a certain point Japan also entered the playing field as a competitor. Until the revolution, the sum total of foreign investments in the country's economy comprised 504 million rubles.

After 1974 the situation in the region concerning political and, particularly, ideological relations with the Western countries changed in a fundamental way in connection with the fact that Ethiopia set its course toward a socialist orientation and took on as a ruling ideology Marxism-Leninism, and likewise declared its intent to create a Marxist-Leninist party.

The external political course of the country also changed. Ethiopia began to conduct an anti-imperialist policy, with the support of the countries of the socialist camp and, first and foremost, of the USSR. The position of foreign capital in Ethiopia was seriously undermined in connection with the nationalization of the property of Western firms in the country and its transfer to the State sector. The capital of the industrial

enterprises which were nationalized in February 1975 (72 enterprises of the manufacturing industry), in which a foreign component was dominant, made up 41% of the general sum of paid capital in this branch of the national economy. In addition, the State gained a controlling package of the stocks of another 29 private companies. In questions of defense, Ethiopia practically cut off relations with the capitalist countries and set its course toward re-arming its army with Soviet weapons.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to consider that Ethiopia was fully liberated from its dependence on Western countries, particularly in the economic sphere. The state of Ethiopian debts to the West in May 1978 comprised 351 million rubles. Meanwhile, Ethiopia, as a rule, pays off its debts and credits in a timely fashion, as well as the interest on them, and allots annually approximately 13 million rubles to this end, which comprises approximately 5% of the annual export earnings and does not represent a burden for the country's finances. Such a policy makes it easier for Ethiopia to receive new means for the development of the country's economy. Ethiopia has an acute need for economic assistance, particularly since the socialist countries have not taken the place of and do not intend fully to take the place of the economic assistance and technical collaboration with the Western countries. From the general volume of foreign economic assistance, the assistance of the Western countries and international organizations which are under their control in the form of loans and credits comprised 75% (status as of May 1978).

It is precisely the economic factor that the Western countries are bearing in mind as they pursue a long-term struggle for Ethiopia. They will push Ethiopia toward economic collaboration with the West, which would enable them to use this factor in pursuit also of political goals, to encourage the Ethiopian leadership, if not to supplant, then to cut back on the influence of the USSR.

The other factor which the Western powers are counting on, is the inescapable, in their minds, growth of bourgeois nationalism, or at the very least, of revolutionary nationalism, which would be accompanied by a break with the socialist countries, an erosion of Marxism-Leninism, and the conduct of a policy of equal distance from the

East and the West.

The Westernizers are making use of the fact that certain of the socialist countries are conducting themselves with restraint with regard to the development of economic collaboration with Ethiopia. These countries include Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and also Romania, although this is for different reasons.

The leadership of the PMAC regards resentfully and with a lack of understanding the fact that the Council for Mutual Economic Aid [Comecon], to which Ethiopia appealed with a proposal for the development of collaboration not only on a bilateral, but on a multilateral basis in March 1977, has since that time not made any concrete resolutions, but has rather confined itself to a declaration of the desire for such collaboration.

The Western countries place serious hopes on the fact that the make-up of the State apparatus, as well as a significant part of the officer staff of the military forces of Ethiopia, remains as before. Many of the bureaucrats and officers received their education in the West, and are subject to the influence of bourgeois ideology, and as a consequence of this they regard unfavorably the course of the country toward a socialist orientation and the primary development of relations with socialist countries. The Ethiopian leadership, which understands this well, is unable to replace the State apparatus due to the lack of cadres which have received the appropriate preparation. The regime remains transitional in the country, new organs of authority have not yet been put into place. The country's leadership has only begun the work of creating a basis for this.

Drawing a general conclusion, one can say with certainty that a long-term course for the USA and the Western countries for the struggle for Ethiopia is being plotted. This is evident if only from the fact that, in spite of the Somali adventure, they do not intend to exchange Ethiopia for Somalia. While creating their position in Somalia, they are setting their strategic sights on Ethiopia. This can be seen both from the degree of patience with which the USA, England, and the Federal Republic of Germany are regarding the sharp anti-imperialist attacks in the speeches of the Ethiopian leaders and in the press.

The head of the government, Mengistu Haile Mariam, in a speech he delivered at a

ceremony in honor of the graduates of the capital's university, spoke about the imperialist plot headed by the USA in the presence of the new American ambassador. The People's Republic of China acts as an objective and actual ally of imperialism in the struggle against the countries of socialist collaboration with Ethiopia. The Westernizers attempt as much as possible to use this factor, and do not disdain even to use anti-Soviet propagandistic slogans, which are invented by the Chinese.

From the other side, in spite of the preservation of the anti-imperialist course, which was manifest in the speeches of the Ethiopian delegation at the Session of the Council of Ministers and the Assembly of the heads of government of the Organization of African States in Khartoum, and likewise at the conference of nonaligned countries in Belgrade, we cannot consider that the struggle is over in the ruling circles of the country about questions of the external political orientation and the essence of a policy of nonalignment. In this struggle a significant role is played by the petit-bourgeois influence, which is still quite strong in the officers' circles.

Before turning to the nature of Ethiopian relations with individual Western countries, it is worth noting that in the framework of the general anti-imperialist course, Ethiopia continues to distinguish between the USA and the countries of the Common Market.

The central flame of anti-imperialist propaganda is directed against the USA, England, the Federal Republic of Germany, and, to a lesser degree, against France, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries.

The relations of Ethiopia with the USA have undergone the greatest changes. [The Americans] have eliminated their military objects from the territory of the country, their propaganda apparatus, their military mission; they have cut by one half the staff of the American embassy. The Ethiopian government delayed the agreement for the new American ambassador by three months and gave it only after a serious discussion, in the course of which the Ethiopians warned that if the anti-Ethiopian campaign in the USA, connected, in part, with human rights issues, was not brought to an end, that they would seek to break off diplomatic relations. After this the United States was forced to reach a certain compromise.

In order to preserve whatever remained of their former position in Ethiopia, the USA is trying to use all of the factors enumerated above (economic pressure, Ethiopian nationalism, ties which remain to the state apparatus). To a large extent the condition of Ethiopian finance depends, in particular, upon whether or not the United States buys coffee, the income from which made up in 1977 approximately 75% of the general export earnings of the country. The USA persists in offering economic assistance to Ethiopia, in particular in answer to the circulated appeal from the Ethiopian commission on assistance to the population of the Ogaden and Wollo. At the same time, they underscore that America offers mainly humanitarian aid, while the USSR is generous only as regards military supplies. Meanwhile, in spite of the fact of the worsening governmental relations, economic assistance from the USA to Ethiopia is growing. Thus, according to information of an American Congressional commission, which visited the countries of the Horn of Africa with the aim of collecting information about the situation in the region, if in 1977 this assistance reached 11 million dollars, then in 1978 it reached 15 million dollars.

In July of this year the USA announced the delivery in September and October of this year of assistance at a level of 12.5 thousand tons of food products, valued in sum at 7 million Ethiopian birr. In accordance with information from the American Embassy, philanthropic assistance from the USA to Ethiopia for the period from 1975 reached 75 million Ethiopian birr.

The relations of Ethiopia with the countries of the Common Market is determined by their mutual interest in maintaining economic and commercial ties. Trying to keep Ethiopia in the sphere of their interests, the Western European countries have regarded the revolution with patience. As does the USA, they make declarations regarding their support for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, both in the event of Somali aggression and with regard to Eritrea. The new French ambassador, upon conveying his letters of credentials to the Head of the PMAC, Mengistu Haile Mariam, even declared that France respects the path of development chosen by Ethiopia in the framework of a policy of socialist orientation. The Federal Republic of Germany did not un-

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