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A U.S. STRATEGY TO FOSTER HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA

INTRODUCTION

The tragic story of Ethiopia's starving masses has largely disappeared from the public eye. But Ethiopians continue to starve. What is worse, Ethiopians are brutalized by one of this century's most repressive regimes.

The policies of the country's dictator, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, have led to the deaths of over one million Ethiopians. His twelve-year old government has exacerbated Ethiopia's famine deliberately by refusing to allow Western food aid to reach many starving Ethiopians; it has bombed opposition areas indiscriminately; and it has created political and economic totalitarianism.

While pursuing these policies, the Mengistu regime has enjoyed consistent and extensive Soviet military support. Since 1977, Moscow has sent approximately \$6 billion worth of military hardware to ensure Mengistu's victory over massive armed opposition in nine of Ethiopia's fourteen provinces. Much of the Soviet military hardware has been used in government-sponsored persecution of Ethiopian civilians and in forcibly resettling over five million Ethiopians into state-run collectives reminiscent of those in Pol Pot's Cambodia. According to accounts by Ethiopian defectors, many of Mengistu's most heinous policies, such as his resettlement program and his ruthless war against the northern province of Eritrea, have been and are being authorized, supported, and directed by Moscow.¹

Arms, Not Food. At the same time, the Soviets have done virtually nothing to help Ethiopia's starving masses. During the 1984-1985 famine and again

¹ See Michael Johns, "Gorbachev's Holocaust: Soviet Complicity in Ethiopia's Famine," *Policy Review*, Summer 1988, p. 74.

during last year's famine, the largest part of Soviet assistance to Ethiopia was military.

By contrast, Western nations, especially the United States, have felt an obligation to act assertively to save the starving. In response to the 1984-1985 famine, the U.S. sent approximately \$760 million worth of official humanitarian assistance. When famine struck again last year, the U.S. dispatched \$112 million in new humanitarian relief. When private help is included, U.S. assistance to Ethiopia over the past four years has amounted to several billion dollars. Without it, the famine of Ethiopia could have been even more devastating.

The problem is that Western generosity has been abused by the Mengistu government. Some portions of the West's humanitarian assistance intended for starving Ethiopians have been diverted to Mengistu's militia.² Other portions of Western aid actually have led to greater suffering and deaths as Mengistu has used the aid to draw into central locations many Ethiopians perceived hostile to the government.

Resettlement, Disease, and Death. These Ethiopians, many unthreatened by famine, then have been transported forcibly to resettlement camps where conditions have often been life threatening. According to Medecins sans Frontieres, a French medical group that operated in Ethiopia before being expelled in December 1985, Mengistu's resettlement program resulted in the deaths of some 100,000 Ethiopians from maltreatment and disease.³ Declared a spokesman for Medecins sans Frontieres in 1986: "International assistance is being used in such a way that it is killing more people than it is saving."⁴

The time has come for the U.S. to reevaluate its policy toward Ethiopia. A new approach is needed that recognizes that Mengistu's Stalin-like policies are the root of Ethiopia's crisis. Consequently, the aim of American policy should be to isolate Mengistu in the world community and to encourage a change in government. Only then will Ethiopians be able to advance permanently beyond their current disaster.

2 Jason W. Clay, *The West and the Ethiopian Famine: Implications for Humanitarian Assistance* (presented at the 86th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 19, 1987), p.20. See also "Marxist army dines on Canadian aid food," *The Toronto Sunday Sun*, April 24, 1988, p. 4. Reporter Peter Worthington visited an overrun Ethiopian army barracks in Eritrea, where he found that Western food aid was feeding Mengistu's army. Worthington reported: "I went to the Ethiopian army kitchen and store depots to see what had been left in the hasty departure (of the Ethiopian troops) — and found, stacked against a wall, a number of 50-kilogram sacks of flour, marked CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) 'Gift of Canada' . . . When I expressed surprise, the Eritreans shrugged and said it was normal for food aid to refugees to be used by the Ethiopian army. They had found the evidence in other posts they had over-run."

3 Medecins sans Frontieres, *Mass Deportations in Ethiopia*, December 1985, p. 53.

4 Remark by Dr. Claude Malhuret, as reported by Doug Bandow, "Mengistu Policies Responsible for Famine," *Human Events*, April 12, 1986, p. 13. In addition, Dr. Claude Malhuret, who is French Secretary of State for Human Rights and former head of Medecins sans Frontieres has remarked that: "Western governments and humanitarian groups like Live Aid are fueling an operation that will be described with hindsight in a few years time as one of the greatest slaughters in the 20th century," *The Christian Cause*, January/February 1987, p. 12.

As part of its new policy, the U.S. should:

◆ ◆ **Provide assistance to Ethiopian resistance movements.** The U.S. should provide military assistance to those noncommunist resistance movements working and fighting to force Mengistu from power.

◆ ◆ **Exert diplomatic pressure on Mengistu.** The U.S. should push to have Mengistu and his policies condemned in such international forums as the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The U.S. should break diplomatic relations with Ethiopia to protest Mengistu's actions and urge other Western nations to do the same.

◆ ◆ **Insist that Moscow cease sending military aid to Mengistu.** The Kremlin has been supplying Mengistu with the military aid he requires to launch warfare against his own people. The U.S. should call publicly on the Soviets to cease sending such aid, much of which is being used to kill innocent civilians.

◆ ◆ **Set new conditions for U.S. famine assistance.** The U.S. should insist that Western humanitarian aid not be distributed by the Ethiopian government. Such aid has been diverted to Mengistu's military and used for other political purposes. All future Western aid should be distributed through private outlets. The U.S. also should insist that Western relief workers be given access throughout Ethiopia to feed the starving. In the past, as part of Mengistu's plan to starve rebel-controlled areas, relief workers have been restricted from distributing aid in some famine areas.

◆ ◆ **Push to have the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa headquarters transferred from Ethiopia.** By headquartering these multinational bodies in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, the member states legitimize Mengistu's government and discredit their organization's position on human rights.

◆ ◆ **Pressure Cuba to remove its troops from Ethiopia.** There are some 2,000 Cuban combat troops in Ethiopia guarding Addis Ababa and assisting Mengistu in his war against northern rebellions. The U.S. should use such public forums as Radio Marti and the Voice of America to criticize Fidel Castro's role in suppressing the Ethiopian people. The U.S. also should inform Cuba that any potential improvement in relations with the U.S. depends on the removal of all Cuban troops from Ethiopia and other African nations.

THE U.S. AND ETHIOPIA UNTIL 1974

Bordering on the Red Sea, just 200 miles from the shores of oil-rich Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia is strategically situated. Its northern shores mark the opening to the Suez Canal, one of the world's most important naval "choke points." Ethiopia also borders two of Africa's most pro-Western countries: Kenya and Somalia.

Ethiopia under Haile Selassie

For most of this century, the U.S. has enjoyed close relations with Ethiopia. These relations first were interrupted when Ethiopia was invaded and occupied by fascist Italy in 1936. Following Ethiopia's liberation in 1941, ties between Ethiopia and the U.S. were strengthened.

During Emperor Haile Selassie's reign (1930-1936 and 1941-1974), Ethiopia was among the West's strongest allies in all of Africa. A treaty of amnesty and economic relations between Ethiopia and the U.S. was signed in September 1951, followed by two mutual defense agreements in 1953.

Under Selassie, Ethiopia hosted the largest number of American Peace Corps volunteers in Africa, while over 10,000 Ethiopian students studied in American universities between the 1950s and 1974. The U.S. also operated Kagnev Station, a military communications facility in Asmara, near the Red Sea. Several thousand American servicemen were based there, and it was considered to be of great strategic importance in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Rise of Mengistu

In September 1974, a group of middle-grade and junior military officers known as the Derg seized power from the 82-year-old Emperor Haile Selassie. Colonel Mengistu, a 37-year-old member of the Derg, two months later began murdering his superiors and his opponents in a bid for control of the Derg. His first victim was General Aman Andom, the moderate, pro-Western Derg chairman. The same night as Aman's murder, 57 top members of Selassie's deposed government were also killed at the Derg's orders.⁵

Murder as Method. These killings are considered the Ethiopian revolution's turning point, after which "blood flowed freely," in the words of David A. Korn, the former Charge d'Affaires at the United States embassy in Addis Ababa.⁶ In July 1976, Mengistu was widely believed to have personally helped execute Major Sisay Habte, one of the few remaining pro-Western members of the Derg, and eighteen other Mengistu opponents.

In February 1977, Mengistu finally seized control of the Derg after a bloody gun fight against Ethiopia's new head of state, Brigadier Tafari Bante, and six other Derg members. Mengistu personally led the shootout, which took place during a meeting of the Derg's Steering Committee at the government's headquarters. It is widely believed that Mengistu sought and received Soviet endorsement for his plans for this palace massacre.⁷ These

⁵ According to David A. Korn, Charge d'Affaires from July 1982 to July 1985 at the U.S. embassy in Addis Ababa: "In the Derg's meeting on 22 November in which the executions were decided, the name of each of the prisoners was called out and anyone who did not think the man should be shot was asked to speak up. Few did." David A. Korn, *Ethiopia, the United States, and the Soviet Union* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

murders removed most of Mengistu's formidable military rivals, enabling him to take control of Ethiopia.

Having eliminated most of his military opposition, one of Mengistu's first acts as Ethiopia's new leader was to get rid of perceived opposition among Ethiopia's civilian population. In November 1977, he launched a four-month campaign, later called the "Red Terror," in which some 10,000 Ethiopian civilians were killed.⁸ Killed too was Colonel Atnafu Abate, Second Vice Chairman of the Derg and the last major military challenge to Mengistu.

THE U.S. AND ETHIOPIA, 1974-1977

Though the U.S. had been close to Selassie, Washington nevertheless was ready to accept the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), which assumed power in September 1974. By many, after all, Selassie was viewed as an aging medieval despot, and his removal raised hope that the new government at last might demonstrate support for political liberties and human rights.

This optimism did not survive two months. In November 1974, the murders by Mengistu and his colleagues of the PMAC's pro-Western chairman and 57 top figures of Selassie's deposed government brought heavy criticism in the U.S.⁹ Tensions between Washington and Addis Ababa mounted as the Ethiopian government's disrespect for human rights continued and as it refused to compensate Americans for their nationalized property in Ethiopia.

Waning of U.S. Sympathy. In 1975, the Ethiopian government requested military assistance from Washington for use in its battle against rebels in Eritrea. American public pressure built to deny the request, and when Washington finally announced that it would send a smaller amount of military equipment than that requested, Ethiopia responded angrily.

In spring 1976, the U.S. agreed to send Ethiopia two fighter bomber squadrons and to consider an Ethiopian request for \$100 million in additional military equipment. Soon after, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger learned of a plan by then PMAC First Vice-Chairman Mengistu to conscript a huge militia with which to launch a final offensive against the Eritrean rebels. Kissinger warned Mengistu that, if the plan were executed, the U.S. would reconsider its decision to send Ethiopia military aid. This apparently gave Mengistu an excuse to seek military assistance openly from Moscow and to distance himself from the U.S.

Moving into the Soviet Orbit

In April 1977, Mengistu ordered the U.S. to close its military missions in Ethiopia, and he abrogated the military assistance agreement with the U.S.

8 U.S. Department of State, "Background Notes: Ethiopia," July 1988, p. 4.

9 *The New York Times* editorialized on November 27, 1974, that these executions had "shocked the world" and criticized the PMAC for acting in "flagrant violation of their promise of a fair trial for all political prisoners."

In July 1977, Somalia attacked Ethiopia to gain control of ethnic Somali areas in Ethiopia's Ogaden Desert. Mengistu asked for and began receiving massive Soviet arms shipments and Cuban combat forces to resist the Somalis. The Somalia invasion was repelled in March 1978, but the Kremlin's enormous amount of military backing for Mengistu has continued.

With Soviet guidance and support, Mengistu has militarized Ethiopian society and has created black Africa's largest and best-equipped army. Some \$6 billion in Soviet military hardware has been sent to Addis Ababa since 1977, much of which has been used to bomb civilian targets in Eritrea, Tigre, and other Ethiopian provinces. Approximately 300,000 Ethiopians, many only twelve years old, have been conscripted into Mengistu's militia. The result: an army twelve times larger than that under Emperor Selassie. The army is assisted by some 2,000 Cuban combat troops, 1,700 Soviet military advisors and troops, and 500 East German military personnel.

The Nature of the Mengistu Regime

Mengistu exercises total control over Ethiopia's government and militia. Concurrently, he holds the positions of chief of state, head of government, head of the country's only political party, the Marxist Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE), and commander of the armed forces. Though a new constitution was approved in 1987, which created an 835-member national legislature, the *Shengo*, as well as several new high-level offices, these new officials lack the authority to dispute Mengistu's total control over Ethiopia. The U.S. State Department recently noted that "it remains unclear what the role and function of these officials and entities will be in the governmental and decisionmaking processes. What is clear is that Mengistu Haile Mariam will continue to be the supreme authority in Ethiopia."¹⁰

Exile and Rebellion. Mengistu's total control of Ethiopia has sparked a growing opposition even among his government's inner circle. Some of his top aides and advisors have abandoned him, going into voluntary exile. These include three of Mengistu's Foreign Ministers, Zewdie G. Selassie, Kisle Wodajo, and Goshu Wolde, Minister of Justice Getachew Kibret, the top two officials in charge of famine relief, 23 of Mengistu's ambassadors, and 42 other Ethiopian diplomats in foreign embassies. The number of Ethiopian exiles now exceeds three million. Many of these confirm the horrifying Western reports of events in Ethiopia. Goshu Wolde, Mengistu's Foreign Minister from 1983 until his defection to the West in 1986, says that Mengistu's "shortsighted and rigidly doctrinaire policies are leading the country and the people into misery and destruction."¹¹ Over 700,000 of Ethiopia's refugees are in neighboring Sudan, and Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq El-Mahdi has estimated that some two-thirds of these refugees are escaping Mengistu's policies rather than seeking relief from drought and famine.¹²

10 U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

11 *The Times of London*, "How the West's food aid keeps a tyrant in power," October 29, 1986.

12 *The Wall Street Journal*, "Eritrea Wins Put Mengistu on Defensive," May 24, 1988, p. 38.

MENGISTU'S REIGN OF TERROR

Like Stalin, Mengistu deliberately has starved areas in which the opposition is strong by keeping out food assistance. When this has failed, he has attacked the areas with bombers and tanks.

Recent reports estimate that as a result of Mengistu's bombings between 350,000 and 500,000 people have fled the northern Ethiopian Asmara-Massawa-Keren triangle. An independent human rights report issued by Amnesty International last August accused the Mengistu government of killing more than 1,500 Eritrean and Tigrean civilians between April and June last year alone.¹³

A victim of government atrocities described an attack last May in Eritrea by Mengistu's militia: "They surrounded the village with tanks, about 15 of them, and called for the people not to run, to come to a meeting. But then the tanks drove over the people, and the ones that ran away they shot with machine guns. . . They killed the animals and burned the houses and then they went to loot."¹⁴ Adds another Ethiopian: "They are not only killing just the men, but women and small children by the bayonet. Since the massacres, especially the women and children are crazy with fear."¹⁵

These atrocities were hidden from the West during the barrage of public attention directed to the Ethiopian famines of 1984-1985 and 1988.

A Man-made Famine

What has gone generally unnoted in the Western coverage of Ethiopia's famines is that they were largely brought on by the Mengistu government. Of the one million Ethiopians estimated to have died in the 1984-1985 famine, three-quarters or more are believed to have starved because Mengistu's resettlement and forced labor policies interrupted planting.¹⁶ Making matters worse, Western ships carrying food relief often were forced to wait in

13 Amnesty International USA (Washington, D.C.), "Extrajudicial Executions and Arrests in Eritrea and Tigre," August 24, 1988.

14 *The New York Times*, "After Rebels' Gains, Ethiopia Vents Its Wrath on Civilians," August 30, 1988, p. A6.

15 *The New York Times*, "Ending Years of Stalemate, Eritrean Rebels Drive Ethiopians Into Retreat," August 23, 1988, p. A10.

16 *The Wall Street Journal*, "Ethiopia's Famine Tax," November 12, 1986, p. 28.

the harbor with tons of food rotting in their holds while Soviet military hardware was unloaded from Soviet and East bloc ships. Mengistu even forced Western donors to pay fees estimated at \$5.93 per ton before food aid could be unloaded.¹⁷ Donors unable to pay the fee were turned away. In 1986, the revenue generated from such fees was estimated to have replaced coffee as Ethiopia's biggest revenue earner.¹⁸ Without these immense levels of Western assistance, which strengthened Mengistu's reign,¹⁹ many observers believe Mengistu very well might have been overthrown.¹⁹

Diversion of Foreign Relief. Mengistu's apparent policy of exacerbating the famine crisis in Ethiopia was evident last April when he responded to renewed famine by ordering all foreign relief workers to leave Eritrea and Tigre provinces, where hunger has been most severe. What seems to have prompted Mengistu is that rebellions are being waged against the government in these provinces. When Mengistu demanded that foreign relief groups in Eritrea and Tigre turn their supplies over to the government, Western relief workers and Eritreans reported that Mengistu was seeking "to divert the food, trucks, medicine and manpower to the war effort, and more importantly to prevent foreigners from witnessing and reporting the widespread killing of civilians."²⁰ Mengistu's forces also deliberately bombed relief trucks carrying grain and other supplies in the north and along the Sudan border. Mengistu's actions left two million Eritreans and Tigreans without food and in danger of death by starvation.

Mengistu has used the famines to break down social and religious communities that might threaten his rule. His villagization program has uprooted over five million Ethiopian peasants forcibly, sending them to squalid government collectives. There, the peasants are forced at gunpoint to

¹⁷ *East African Port Charge Comparison*, Agency for International Development, p. 6. This estimate is based on an assessment of a \$5.80 per ton unloading fee for bagged food aid and a \$2,176 docking fee for a 17,000-ton ship. In the case of bulked food aid, the fees assessed Western donors by the Mengistu government were even higher.

¹⁸ *The Wall Street Journal*, *op. cit.*, November 12, 1986.

¹⁹ *The Washington Post* editorialized on January 18, 1985 that Western famine assistance is being used "chiefly to the benefit of the Mengistu government. . . . The regime is being kept afloat and spared the worst effects of its own bad policy choices and its own political errors by food and development aid from noncommunist sources." Dawit Wolde Giorgis, head of Ethiopia's relief agency during the 1984-1985 famine, has remarked that "There is no doubt in my mind that without this (Western) help there would have been a bloody chaos which would have resulted in the removal of Mengistu and his henchmen." (*The Times of London*, *op. cit.*)

²⁰ *The New York Times*, *op. cit.*, August 23, 1988.

walk miles to and from the fields every day, turn their produce over to the state, and attend pro-Mengistu propaganda meetings.

Another government resettlement program is designed to eliminate entire communities and thereby remove potential recruits for local insurgencies. Property has been confiscated, mosques have been burned, religious leaders have been executed, and families have been divided. Frequently, famine aid has been used to lure peasants to central locations from where they forcibly have been resettled.

Mounting Number of Victims. The resettlement program has claimed 100,000 peasant victims. Most were kept in regroupment prisons prior to resettlement, where they were denied food, and then transported in unsanitary closed trucks, which caused cholera and other diseases.²¹ In interviews with Ethiopian refugees from the resettlement program in Sudan, more than 40 percent said that they were beaten during resettlement; 85 percent said they were separated from at least one member of their immediate families.²² Occasionally when peasants have been unwilling to cooperate in resettlement, they have been shot. In February 1988, for instance, when primarily Tigrean peasants from Korem refused to be resettled by the government, Mengistu's militia opened fire, killing at least 20 civilians.²³

In 1984, meanwhile, as Ethiopia's first famine was commencing, Mengistu organized a gala \$200 million celebration for the 10th anniversary of communist rule in Ethiopia. Prior to the celebration, starving Ethiopians were swept from the streets of Addis Ababa so that Soviet military equipment could be displayed in a parade.

The International Policy of the Mengistu Regime

Mengistu has spent his twelve years in power promoting Marxist-Leninist movements throughout Africa. Two years after seizing power, he boasted that he was "the Castro of Africa."²⁴ Since then, he has supported the Zimbabwe African National Union insurgency that eventually toppled Ian Smith in Rhodesia, the terrorist South West African People's Organization (SWAPO)

21 Dawit Wolde Giorgis, head of Ethiopia's internal relief agency during the worst months of the country's 1984-1985 famine, has remarked that force has been used in resettling reluctant villagers (*Times of London, op. cit.*). Another Ethiopian government defector, Mariam-Kidane Betrou, who was present at meetings with the Soviets in which resettlement was discussed, contends that the Soviets were the chief sponsors of the resettlement campaign. "They are behind it; they made the plans; they urged it on," said Betrou (Johns, *op. cit.*).

22 Jason W. Clay and Bonnie K. Holcomb, *Politics and the Ethiopian Famine 1984-1985* (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1986), p. 82 and 87. One resettlement victim, Amete Gebremedhin, a Tigrean in her early 40s, told Clay and Holcomb that, after she had objected to being taken away from her husband and children, "The soldiers laughed and said: 'What do you care about your children? You will find new ones.'"

23 *The Washington Post*, "Ethiopia Said to Kill 20 Refusing Resettlement," February 12, 1988, p. A29.

24 *The Los Angeles Times*, "Ethiopia's Mengistu Claims Unique Role," May 16, 1979, and *The Washington Post*, "Ethiopia's Mengistu Seen Playing Role of Castro in Africa," March 17, 1979.

in South West Africa (Namibia), and the Polisario movement in the Western Sahara.

Today, even as his countrymen starve, Mengistu continues to try to destabilize parts of Africa. Mengistu has sent his pilots to Angola to fly combat missions against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces and has supported aggression against both Somalia and Sudan.²⁵

THE U.S. AND MENGISTU: A NEW U.S. POLICY

Though the U.S. enjoyed extremely close relations with Ethiopia under Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, this relationship has deteriorated since Mengistu's rise to power in 1977. The reasons: Mengistu's human rights abuses and foreign policy.

From 1974 to 1977, the U.S. supplied Ethiopia with approximately \$180 million in military equipment, but pressure over Mengistu's human rights violations led Washington to terminate military aid to Ethiopia in 1977. Relations continued to deteriorate throughout the late 1970s as Mengistu consolidated his military and diplomatic alliance with Moscow and continued his reckless disregard for human rights. In July 1979, the U.S. terminated its development assistance program with Ethiopia.

In July 1980, Mengistu ordered Washington to recall its ambassador from Addis Ababa; the U.S. responded by ordering Ethiopia's ambassador to leave Washington. Today, each country is represented only by a Charge d' Affaires. The U.S. also has voted consistently against International Monetary Fund facilities for Ethiopia.

Congressional Sanctions. In 1985, all U.S. economic assistance to Ethiopia, with the exception of humanitarian disaster and emergency relief assistance, was prohibited by Congress. This past year, in response to Mengistu's mounting human rights violations, Congress passed sanctions legislation against the Mengistu regime. This requires the Administration to issue quarterly reports on the human rights situation in Ethiopia. If violations continue, then the President is empowered to impose economic sanctions against Mengistu.

There is almost no chance for the life of Ethiopia's 46 million citizens to improve so long as Mengistu remains in power. While the U.S. cannot topple Mengistu, it can take actions that encourage a change of regime.

²⁵ *The Washington Times*, "Ethiopian pilots join in Angolan war," August 1, 1986.

The U.S. should:

◆ ◆ **Aid anti-Mengistu forces.** One of the most humanitarian policies that the U.S. could pursue in Ethiopia would be supporting such noncommunist Ethiopian freedom fighters as the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance (EPDA), who are fighting Mengistu's government. Ethiopians are increasingly demonstrating their determination to overthrow Mengistu.²⁶ The U.S. could assist them with military aid to the EDU and EPDA.

◆ ◆ **Break diplomatic relations with Ethiopia.** By maintaining diplomatic relations with Mengistu's government, the U.S. lends credibility to Mengistu and sends mixed signals about how the U.S. views his policies.

◆ ◆ **Publicly condemn Mengistu.** The U.S. should push to have Mengistu and his policies condemned in international forums such as the United Nations. The U.S. should also urge African states to condemn Mengistu in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and to support the expulsion of Ethiopia from that organization.

◆ ◆ **Seek the removal of international organizations' headquarters from Ethiopia.** The U.S. should push for the OAU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to move their headquarters out of Ethiopia. By basing these multinational bodies in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, member states are legitimizing Mengistu and discrediting their organizations' position on human rights.

◆ ◆ **Insist that the Soviets cease sending Mengistu military aid.** Moscow has been supplying Mengistu with the equipment and material he uses for his attacks on the Ethiopian people. This makes the Soviets an accomplice in the Ethiopian holocaust. In future meetings with the Soviets, especially in discussions of human rights, the U.S. should inform them that further Soviet military assistance to Mengistu is inconsistent with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign for greater respect in the West. The U.S. should urge the Soviet leader to make Ethiopia a genuine example of a commitment to human rights by ending his military support for Mengistu.

◆ ◆ **Press Cuba to remove its combat troops from Ethiopia.** By maintaining some 2,000 Cuban combat troops in Ethiopia, Fidel Castro has been assisting Mengistu in his bid to control the rebellion in the Ethiopian populace. These 2,000 elite Cuban troops guard Mengistu from his own militia and people, neither of which are trusted by the dictator. Castro's troops have also participated in aerial bombardments of civilian targets and other attacks on Ethiopian civilians. The U.S. should condemn Castro for this

²⁶ In addition to armed rebellions in nine of Ethiopia's fourteen provinces, thousands of Ethiopian defectors in Sudan and Somalia have expressed their desire to fight against Mengistu. Yonas Deressa, founder of the Ethiopian Refugees Education and Relief Foundation, has remarked that "tens of thousands of fighting men" are waiting within the 1.8 million refugees in the Sudan and 800,000 in Somalia. "We could have 50,000 men in the field in a month, but we need money for food, medical supplies, logistical field support and mobile radios" *The Washington Times*, November 19, 1986, p. B1.

in all available forums. The U.S. should use its Radio Marti broadcasts to Cuba to alert the Cuban people to Castro's role in the violence against the Ethiopian people.

◆ ◆ **Provide more thorough human rights reports on Ethiopia.** As part of last October's economic sanctions bill against Ethiopia, Congress required the Administration to issue reports every three months on whether the Mengistu government is forcing resettlement, forcing confinement in existing resettlement camps, diverting relief supplies to the military, denying international relief assistance to persons at risk of famine, seizing relief assets, or prohibiting the monitoring of food distribution and delivery by international relief workers.

The Administration's first report to Congress on these violations was issued by the State Department last October. It was extremely vague on details and did not fulfill the Act's requirements to include in the report how the U.S. is responding to violations cited in the report. Congress and the Bush Administration should demand subsequent reports to be more comprehensive and to be reviewed by the Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, and the human rights bureau at the State Department.

◆ ◆ **Assist Radio Free Ethiopia.** Operated by the noncommunist resistance and based in Sudan, Radio Free Ethiopia (RFE) broadcasts independent news about Ethiopia in Ethiopia's three major languages. Its broadcasts are believed to reach most of the Ethiopian population, including Addis Ababa. The U.S. should subsidize this effort, an Ethiopian equivalent of U.S. Radio Marti broadcasts to Cuba.

CONCLUSION

Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam has proved to be one of the world's most brutal dictators. He is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen and for the severe hunger of millions more. His remaining in power endangers the lives of all Ethiopians.

The objective of U.S. policy toward Ethiopia should be the departure of Mengistu from power and the assurance that he is replaced by a leader who will respect the lives and rights of the Ethiopian people. With decisive U.S. action, this can be accomplished. Without such action, the Ethiopian people will surely continue to suffer.

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