

January 17, 1985

## **ETHIOPIA'S KREMLIN CONNECTION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

While Ethiopians by the thousands were starving to death, ships carrying food supplies last year were unable to dock at Ethiopia's ports. They had to wait until Soviet freighters finished unloading their cargos of cement. This and countless similar incidents attest to the preeminent influence Moscow now exercises in Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn of Africa. It is an area of extraordinary strategic importance--it sits on the southern flank of the Middle East and on the western flank of vital oil shipping routes in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea. During the 1970s, Moscow deftly installed itself as the pre-dominant external power in the region. By 1979, U.S. influence in the Horn had waned dangerously. While the famine in Ethiopia rightly rivets the world's attention, of much greater long term concern is the threat posed to the West by Moscow's gains on the Horn.

Opportunism has been the hallmark of Soviet policy in the region. When the West failed to meet Somalia's perceived security needs in the 1960s, for example, Moscow moved swiftly to become Somalia's patron. When Washington failed to meet Ethiopia's security needs in the 1970s, Moscow quickly delivered large quantities of arms. To expand its influence in Ethiopia, Moscow mobilized its Cuban, East German, South Yemeni and Libyan auxiliaries.

This investment paid off. Last fall Ethiopia established a Communist party modeled along Soviet lines. Washington's neglect of the Horn has been far from benign. The Ethiopian people have suffered terrible hardships under the misguided economic policies of their government that have exacerbated the current famine. The U.S. should help the Ethiopian people avoid starvation by mounting a food relief airlift and pressing the Mengistu regime

to change its shortsighted Marxist economic policies.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. should step up its involvement in the Horn by strengthening relations with Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya.

#### THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE HORN OF AFRICA

The increasing geopolitical importance of the Horn of Africa is based primarily on its proximity to the oil-rich Persian Gulf and to oil transport routes from the Gulf. Located within 900 to 1,500 miles of Persian Gulf oilfields, the Horn is a potential staging area for military intervention or political subversion. The Horn also dominates two of the West's vital oil arteries--the sea routes that bring Gulf oil through the Indian Ocean along the Cape route and through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

Closely aligned with the Soviet Union, Ethiopia has given Moscow access to naval facilities in the Dahlak Islands in the Red Sea and the use of its airbases. Following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. obtained access to airfields and port facilities in Somalia and Kenya. These facilities could play an important role in the deployment and logistical support of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force, should it be needed to defend friendly Gulf states.

Events in the Horn also affect the balance of power in North Africa. The Ethiopian highlands feed the Blue Nile, the source of much of Egypt's water supply. In conjunction with its ally Libya, Ethiopia is well positioned to foment instability in volatile Sudan, Egypt's soft underbelly. A pro-Soviet Ethiopia therefore constitutes a potential threat to Egypt and Sudan as well as Saudi Arabia.

#### THE SOVIET UNION AND PRE-REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA

Moscow long has eyed the Horn of Africa. Under the Tsars, Russia courted Ethiopia in an effort to outflank the Ottoman Empire. Following World War II, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov sought to obtain for Moscow trusteeship over the port of Massawa in the Italian colony of Eritrea as partial compensation for damages inflicted by the Italian army inside Russia during the war. Though Molotov failed, Moscow enjoyed correct relations with Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie. Following their standard operating procedures in the Third World, the Soviets offered modest amounts of economic aid while seeking to exploit Ethiopia's internal weaknesses and external enmities.

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<sup>1</sup> See James A. Phillips and Richard D. Fisher, Jr., "A Plan for Rescuing Starving Ethiopians," Heritage Foundation Background No. 400, December 27, 1984.

Although Moscow paid lip service to Ethiopia's territorial integrity, it covertly strengthened Eritrean guerrillas--separatists who have been fighting the central government since 1962--by channeling aid through third parties. Moscow's East European satellites supplied arms, Libya provided money, and South Yemen became an arms transfer point and training ground.<sup>2</sup> The Cubans furnished support through its propaganda organ, AALAPSO (African, Asian, Latin American People's Solidarity Organization), and trained members of the Eritrean Liberation Front in Cuba.<sup>3</sup>

By aiding the Eritreans, Moscow enhanced its prestige in the Muslim world, which supported the predominantly Muslim Eritrean Liberation Front against predominantly Christian Ethiopia. More important, Soviet encouragement of the Eritrean insurgency was a major destabilizing factor that undermined Haile Selassie's pro-Western government.<sup>4</sup> Moscow also supported radical Ethiopian student movements in Europe and North America as an investment in the future. One of these groups, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Movement, eventually emerged as a rival to the revolutionary military government after the overthrow of Haile Selassie.

#### THE SOVIET UNION AND SOMALIA

Since gaining independence in 1960, Somalia has been a vehemently irredentist state determined to unite all Somalis in the Horn under its flag. The presence of ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia's Ogaden province, in Djibouti, and in northeast Kenya has therefore strained Somalia's relations with its neighbors. Because of Somalia's territorial ambitions, Western states were reluctant to build up the Somali army. In 1962, for example, the West offered Somalia \$10 million in security assistance; the Somalis rejected this and instead accepted a Soviet offer for \$32 million. Its security assistance program gave Moscow an entree into Somalia's armed forces. The Soviets were able to cultivate contacts with the Somali officer corps and may have assisted in General Siad Barre's 1969 military coup.<sup>5</sup> Soviet-Somalian relations grew increasingly close following the coup and Barre moved to terminate U.S. aid programs. Moscow flooded Somalia with arms and military advisers, triggering a one-sided arms race in the Horn. Between 1970 and 1975, the size of the Somali army jumped from 12,000 to 23,000 soldiers; up to 2,400 Somali military personnel trained in the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> By 1974 Somalia's army

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Henze, Russians and the Horn: Opportunism and the Long View (European American Institute for Security Research, 1983), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Papp, "The Soviet Union and Cuba in Ethiopia," Current History, March 1979, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Henze, "Communism and Ethiopia," Problems of Communism, May-June 1981, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Payton, "The Somali Coup of 1969: The Case for Soviet Complicity," Journal of Modern African Studies, September 1980.

<sup>6</sup> James Dougherty, The Horn of Africa: A Map of Political-Strategic Conflict (Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1982), p. 25.

had grown to half the size of Ethiopia's, though Ethiopia's population was ten times greater than Somalia's.

In July 1974 Somalia became the first sub-Saharan country to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. In return for its extensive military assistance, Moscow gained access for its expanding navy to anchorages off the Chagos Archipelago and to the ports of Mogadishu and Berbera. Somalian bases became an important component of the logistical network that permitted the Soviets in the early 1970s to expand their naval presence astride the western oil supply routes in the Indian Ocean.

### THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION

The 1974 overthrow of Haile Selassie began as a limited objective military revolt which gradually became a "creeping revolution."<sup>7</sup> The army launched a "revolution on the installment plan"<sup>8</sup> that began with bourgeois goals and ended with communist control. Summer 1974 saw the emergence of a mysterious body, the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee--called the Dergue, the Amharic word for "committee." This clandestine group gradually stripped the Emperor of his authority, reduced him to a figurehead, and then deposed him in September 1974.

By late 1974, Major Mengistu Haile Mariam (now a Lt. Colonel) had emerged from the shadows as the effective leader of the Dergue. In December 1974, he proclaimed that "Ethiopian socialism," a nebulous populist, nationalist ideology, would become the new blueprint for development. The Dergue, meanwhile was wracked by bitter ideological and personal disputes. It eliminated half its own membership by December 1976 through purges, executions, and shootouts.

Rising opposition from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (the EPRP--formerly known as the EPRM) and other groups on the left and from the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) on the right undermined the revolutionary government. To crush leftist urban guerrillas, the regime unleashed the "Red Terror" in November 1977. By the following January, as many as 10,000 members of the EPRP are believed to have fallen victim to the terror<sup>9</sup> with thousands more confined to "political reeducation" camps. By May 1978 the EPRP's back had been broken and the Dergue developed a hammerlock on Ethiopia's political life. In its first four years of rule it killed up to 30,000 Ethiopians for political reasons.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Colin Legum, Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> Dougherty, op. cit., p. VII.

<sup>9</sup> David and Marina Ottaway, Afrocommunism (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1981), p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> Dougherty, op. cit., p. 11.

Even worse, the economic policies that it imposed, modeled after the Soviet Union's, are to a great extent responsible for the catastrophic famine that threatens the lives of seven million Ethiopians.

#### THE DILEMMA OF THE HORN--1977

The Soviet Union initially responded in a cautious, pragmatic fashion to the dynamic situation that prevailed in the Horn after the Ethiopian revolution. Moscow welcomed the removal of Haile Selassie, one of Washington's closest friends in Black Africa, but was wary of Ethiopia's revolutionary military government. In the first two years of the revolution, Moscow kept its options open by making contact with the Dergue while maintaining working relationships with a wide variety of leftist groups and separatist movements. In addition to the EPRP, the Soviets flirted with the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement and maintained links with the Eritreans through Italian communists.<sup>11</sup>

Moscow's caution was also motivated by a reluctance to jeopardize extensive Soviet political and military investment in Somalia. As Ethiopia's arch-rival, Somalia would regard a Soviet opening to Addis Ababa as an unfriendly act. After its intervention in Angola, Moscow also did not wish to provoke Washington further, particularly before the 1976 American presidential election. Moscow therefore adopted a wait-and-see posture toward Ethiopia through 1976.

The Dergue meanwhile shifted ideological gears in April 1976 by unveiling a "Program for the National Democratic Revolution" and declared its firm commitment to "scientific socialism." When Mengistu became the undisputed leader of the Dergue following a shootout in February 1977 that killed eight colleagues, Moscow was quick to congratulate him.

Shortly thereafter the Soviet Union made an attempt to "square the circle" between Ethiopia and Somalia in an effort to cement good relations with both countries. Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny and Cuban Premier Fidel Castro toured the Horn in March 1977 peddling the concept of a radical southern Red Sea federation of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen and the autonomous provinces of Eritrea and the Ogaden. This would have given Moscow its broadest possible power base in the region. Somalia's leader, Siad Barre, balked at the idea, however, and Ethiopian-Somalian relations continued to deteriorate.

Mengistu flew to Moscow in December 1976 seeking arms. The Kremlin did not commit itself firmly to his regime until after he had broken with Washington. U.S.-Ethiopian relations deteriorated sharply in the spring of 1977 when the incoming Carter

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<sup>11</sup> Henze, "Communism in Ethiopia," p. 63.

Administration notified Ethiopia that it was cutting back military aid, in part due to human rights violations. By April 1977 U.S.-Ethiopian relations had reached a nadir; the following month, the U.S. suspended all military aid to Ethiopia.

The Ethiopians required foreign arms to contain Eritrean separatism and deter the Somali threat to Ogaden. Mengistu sought to undercut Soviet support for both these threats as well as to secure a reliable source of large scale military assistance. In pursuit of this, he flew to Moscow in May 1977 for a week-long state visit. There he signed a "Declaration of the Foundation for Relationships and Cooperation." Although this was a more limited agreement than the Soviet-Somali Friendship Treaty, it was an opening wedge for greater Soviet-Ethiopian military cooperation. The Kremlin began shipping arms to Ethiopia and Cuban advisors arrived to teach Ethiopian soldiers how to use them. The U.S. estimated that the number of Cuban advisors jumped from 50 in May 1977 to 3,000 that by July.<sup>12</sup> Some of the Cubans were transferred directly from Somalia,<sup>13</sup> an action that must have set Siad Barre's teeth on edge.

#### MOSCOW AND THE WAR IN THE HORN

The July 1977 Somali intervention in the Ogaden was an attempt to defeat Ethiopia and annex Somali-inhabited regions before Soviet arms could tilt the balance. Somalia feared a Soviet-backed Ethiopia much more than it had feared a U.S.-backed Ethiopia, because as Mogadishu well knew, Soviet military aid would be more extensive and come with fewer restrictions attached. The Somali gamble initially succeeded and Somali troops advanced deep into Ogaden. Mogadishu, however, had misjudged the Soviets. Moscow severed its arms pipeline to Somalia in August and committed surrogate troops to the defense of Ethiopia. The Somali advance was slowed by South Yemeni troops,<sup>14</sup> and Ethiopian resistance stiffened when Cuban forces arrived at the front.

An enraged Siad Barre expelled the Soviets from Somalia on November 13, 1977. Less than two weeks later Moscow began a massive military airlift to Ethiopia that demonstrated the impressive capabilities of the Soviet air transport fleet.<sup>15</sup> A thousand-man Cuban expeditionary force was airlifted from Cuba to Ethiopia via the Soviet Union and by January 1978 nearly 20,000 Cuban soldiers had been flown to Ethiopia in Soviet aircraft, many of them from Angola.<sup>16</sup> By March 1978, Moscow had delivered

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<sup>12</sup> Papp, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>13</sup> Henze, Russians and the Horn, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Lawrence Whetten, "The Soviet-Cuban Presence in the Horn of Africa," RUSI Journal, September 1978, p. 41.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Science Monitor, January 25, 1978.

more than \$1 billion of weapons to Ethiopia, a figure that dwarfed the value of all U.S. aid since 1953.<sup>17</sup> Cuban troops directed by Soviet generals began a devastating counteroffensive in January 1978 that drove the Somalis back to the border by March.

Its self-confidence bolstered by new Soviet arms and the Soviet-engineered defeat of Somalia, the Ethiopian army then moved against the Eritreans. The Cubans were reluctant to fight the Eritrean revolutionaries they previously had trained, but did maintain perimeter defense in Eritrean cities and provide artillery support.<sup>18</sup> The Soviets furnished leadership and logistical support and bombarded the insurgents from ships off the Eritrean coast.<sup>19</sup> By late 1978, Addis Ababa had reversed its military fortunes in Eritrea but could not deliver a knockout punch to the rebels.

Mengistu travelled to Moscow once again in November 1978 to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The Soviet Union, confronted with an either-or choice in the Horn, had "traded up" by switching from Somalia to Ethiopia. The prime determinant of Ethiopia's decision to embrace the Soviets was not ideology but security. Mengistu knew that Moscow could supply him with the arms he needed to fend off his external and internal enemies. Moscow supplied Ethiopia, a state which had only 62 tanks and 27 jet fighters, with over 350 tanks and 70 jet fighters in less than a year.<sup>20</sup>

As the world's leading producer of conventional weapons, the Soviet Union had huge stockpiles ready for immediate delivery. In contrast to the U.S., where lead times on arms deliveries averaged three years, lead times for the Soviet arms deliveries averaged little more than one year.<sup>21</sup> Soviet arms deliveries, moreover, were not restricted to defensive uses and were not subject to interruptions due to allegations of human rights violations.

#### THE SOVIET UNION AND THE HORN IN THE 1980s

Ethiopia made the Dahlak Archipelago off the Eritrean coast available to the Soviet navy, which has installed naval support facilities. Soviet planes began to make surveillance flights over the Indian Ocean from Asmara airfield.<sup>22</sup> And Ethiopia became a link in the ring of radical pro-Soviet states encircling Saudi Arabia, Moscow's ultimate target in the Persian Gulf.

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<sup>17</sup> Tom Farer, War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: The Widening Storm (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1979), p. 125.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Fontaine, "Cuban Strategy in Africa," Strategic Review, Summer 1978, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Christian Science Monitor, December 5, 1978.

<sup>20</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, Arms Flow to LDCs: U.S.-Soviet Comparisons, p. ii.

<sup>21</sup> Foreign Report, The Economist, August 18, 1983, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Keller, op. cit., p. 84.

In August 1981 Ethiopia joined Libya and Marxist South Yemen in a tripartite pact. This eased Soviet security planning because it committed each of the three Soviet client states to defend the others. In effect, Ethiopia is now a potential Soviet staging area for defending Qaddafi's Libya or Marxist South Yemen. Moreover, Ethiopia has become a potential staging area for operations aimed at destabilizing Saudi Arabia, 200 miles across the Red Sea to the north.

The militarization of Ethiopia has continued despite the deescalation of the Ogaden war. Moscow has poured up to \$4 billion of military aid into the country since 1977 and the Ethiopian armed forces have grown from 65,000 men to more than 250,000 today.<sup>23</sup> This gives Ethiopia the largest standing army in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Ethiopian Air Force includes "volunteer" pilots from Cuba, North Korea and other Soviet bloc states and is dependent on 300 Soviet maintenance technicians.<sup>24</sup> The Cuban presence has been reduced in the last year due to Ethiopia's inability to pay the \$600 per month fee that Cuba demands for each mercenary.<sup>25</sup> As of May 1984, six thousand Cuban troops remained in Ethiopia along with one thousand military advisors and three thousand civilian advisors.<sup>26</sup> There are an estimated 550 to 3,000 East Germans<sup>27</sup> working with the Ethiopian government in various capacities and the East German Security Service (SSD) works closely with the Ethiopian intelligence community.<sup>28</sup> The Soviets themselves post roughly 2,400 military advisors in the country.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to replicating the Soviet military system, the Ethiopians have gone far in replicating the Soviet political system. In September 1984 the Ethiopian Workers Party (WPE), a Soviet-style party of roughly 30,000 members was founded. Moscow had been pressing Mengistu for years to organize an all-embracing Communist party but the wily Ethiopian leader had dragged his feet, apprehensive that Moscow-trained ideologues might some day pose a threat to the Dergue's military rule. Mengistu circumvented this threat by inserting the seven leading members of the Dergue into the WPE Politburo, along with four civilians added for window dressing. Nevertheless, Moscow was jubilant at the birth of a new pro-Soviet Communist ruling party. Delegations from more than 50 Communist parties around the world arrived in Addis

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<sup>23</sup> Anthony Cordesman, The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), p. 792.

<sup>24</sup> The Economist, February 11, 1984, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Foreign Report, May 3, 1984, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Cordesman, op. cit., p. 792.

<sup>27</sup> John Starrels, East Germany: Marxist Mission in Africa (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1981), p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Soviet Analyst, September 1, 1982, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Soviet World Outlook, September 15, 1984, pp. 4-5.



Ababa this September--in the midst of the famine--to celebrate the lavish inauguration of the WPE.<sup>30</sup>

Mengistu, for his part, has made it clear that the quid pro quo for the formation of the WPE is stepped up economic aid. Ethiopia, one of the poorest countries in the world, has been plagued by economic stagnation since the revolution. Agriculture, the mainstay of the economy, has been hampered by drought, the war in Eritrea, inefficient collective farming, and an inflexible government pricing system that nearly prohibits private farmers from expanding food production. The Ethiopian economy has expanded at an annual rate of only 2.2 percent since the revolution, while the population has grown from 2.5 percent to 2.7 percent annually.<sup>31</sup> The arms debt to the Soviet Union is estimated to be \$2.5 billion to \$4 billion,<sup>32</sup> a colossal burden for a one export economy, hurt by falling coffee prices.

To make things worse, this year Ethiopia is confronted by a famine that threatens up to seven million Ethiopians with starvation. The Mengistu regime has criticized Western relief agencies for their alleged slowness in responding to the problem. The truth is that the Ethiopian government bears the bulk of the blame. Ethiopia is modeling its agricultural system along Soviet lines, despite the fact that the Soviets cannot satisfy their own food needs, let alone Ethiopia's. Inefficient state farms produce expensive food supplies for the army and the cities, while the rural population bears the brunt of the food shortages.

The Mengistu regime has accorded famine relief a low priority. It initially refused to mobilize army transport to distribute food and to give food shipments preferential treatment in congested Ethiopian ports. Instead of helping to distribute food, army units patrol roads to keep starving peasants out of the cities. The Dergue has been charging an import tax of \$12.50 per ton for gift food, plus handling and trucking charges of \$165 per ton.<sup>33</sup> It also has withheld food relief from rebellious provinces such as Eritrea and Tigre, where food shortages are particularly severe.

In a colossal display of insensitivity, the Mengistu regime spent between \$150 and \$200 million on ceremonies commemorating the tenth anniversary of the revolution in September 1984 at a time when thousands of Ethiopians were dying daily of starvation and foreign reserves had fallen to \$50 million.<sup>34</sup> Many observers believe that Mengistu purposefully concealed the extent of the famine in the months before the anniversary festivities to avoid tarnishing the revolution's image.

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<sup>30</sup> Washington Post, September 24, 1984.

<sup>31</sup> New York Times, October 8, 1984, p. A8.

<sup>32</sup> Flora Lewis, "Moral Test in Ethiopia," New York Times, November 9, 1984.

<sup>33</sup> Washington Post, September 18, 1984, p. A15.

<sup>34</sup> Christian Science Monitor, May 24, 1984.

## U.S. POLICY AND THE HORN

The U.S., preoccupied with Watergate and disengagement from Vietnam, accepted the fall of Haile Selassie passively. Washington drifted with events and failed to establish high-level contact with the Dergue. From early 1974 until summer 1978, an American ambassador was present in Addis Ababa for only 16 months.<sup>35</sup> U.S. policy was hesitant, reactive, and noncommittal.

The Ford Administration initially attempted to demonstrate its goodwill to the Dergue by offering in 1975 the largest U.S. arms sales credits ever to Ethiopia--\$135 million for M-60 tanks and F-5E jet fighters. Whatever influence Washington might have obtained by restoring the growing imbalance of military power caused by the Soviet buildup of Somalia evaporated, however, after Jimmy Carter took office. His Administration ignored global balance of power considerations in several simplistic attempts to curb U.S. arms transfers and punish alleged human rights violators. Despite the growing strategic importance of the Horn, the Carter Administration perceived the region in an African rather than an East-West context.

After Somalia invaded the Ogaden, the Carter Administration sat on the sidelines by embargoing arms sales to both sides and calling for an end to the fighting. By abdicating any role in the Horn, the Carter Administration allowed Moscow to fill a vacuum. Carter hoped for an "African solution" to the conflict but instead was confronted with a Soviet solution. It was only after the other Soviet pincer closed on the Gulf through Afghanistan in 1979 that Washington began to recognize the Horn's strategic importance.

As a result, the U.S. in 1980 negotiated agreements with Somalia and Kenya for access to military facilities. Even then Washington was reluctant to tilt too far toward Somalia for fear of offending Ethiopia. This changed when the Reagan Administration took office. The Reagan Administration has increased aid to Somalia, but remains wary of Somalia's irredentist ambitions.

Washington now must stress to the Ethiopians the opportunity costs of their communist system and Soviet connection. American humanitarian aid to starving Ethiopians must not subsidize Ethiopia's commitment to its disastrous socialist experiments. The U.S. humanitarian food relief effort in Ethiopia must ensure that the food will be distributed throughout the country including the rebel areas. Communist regimes have used starvation as a political weapon in the Ukraine, Cambodia, and Afghanistan. Mengistu should not be allowed to do the same in Ethiopia.

Washington should press Ethiopia to modify its agricultural policies by increasing incentives for small landholders to expand food production. Otherwise Addis Ababa will become a perpetual

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<sup>35</sup> Henze, Russians and the Horn, p. 29.

relief supplicant. The U.S. and other Western aid donors also should press Mengistu to soften his uncompromising rejection of a negotiated settlement in Eritrea. After 23 years of war, the Eritreans have signalled willingness to accept a negotiated solution. Ending the bloodshed would not only reduce the staggering burden of military spending on the Ethiopians and allow more resources to be channeled into food production, but it would reduce Soviet leverage over Addis Ababa. The strong nationalism and religious sentiments of the Ethiopian population, combined with the failure of Soviet-style economic programs, would then tend to deflect Ethiopia from its Soviet orbit.

Until Ethiopia can be weaned from Moscow, the U.S. should work quietly with Ethiopian opposition groups and with other anti-Soviet states in the region to contain Soviet influence in the Horn. France keeps 4,000 troops at its naval base in Djibouti. Somalia and Sudan fear Ethiopian subversion and require economic aid to block it. Saudi Arabia might help provide such assistance as well as help unify rival Eritrean guerrilla movements and prod them to accept a negotiated settlement. Egypt can be counted on to back Sudan with military force, if necessary. Israel, which historically enjoyed a tacit alliance with Ethiopia against the Arab world, probably still retains intelligence assets there. Washington can no longer afford to view the Horn in isolation but must look at it as part of the wider Middle East-Persian Gulf picture.

## CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union opportunistically established itself in the Horn by exploiting Western failure to meet the security needs of Somalia in the 1960s and Ethiopia in the 1970s. Due to Western passivity Moscow was able to play a solo balance of power game in the region, first building up Somalia's military power, then taking advantage of the threat this posed to Ethiopia to expand its influence there.

Moscow now enjoys considerable influence over the strongest state in the Horn. It can ameliorate Ethiopia's external security problems but has been incapable of resolving Ethiopia's internal problems--ethnic insurgencies and agricultural catastrophe. Only the West can resolve Ethiopia's economic problems. The U.S. therefore should offer the prospect of long-term American aid if Addis Ababa abandons its Soviet-style economic and political systems. The Mengistu regime may turn a deaf ear to this offer, but its domestic opposition certainly will not.

In the meantime, Washington should strengthen relations with Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya while establishing ties with Ethiopian opposition movements. Only this possibly can check further Soviet expansion in the area if Ethiopia, ignoring the lesson of its famine, decides to keep its Kremlin connection.

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