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A SOMALI'S PERCEPTION**

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BY  
**ABDI GAWIDO**

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by

10 Abdi Gawido

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## LES PERSPECTIVES DE LA CORNE DE L'AFRIQUE

- LE POINT DE VUE D'UN SOMALI -

### SOMMAIRE

L'utilisation des gaz de combat par les troupes italiennes de Mussolini contre les guerriers éthiopiens armés de lances, la réception sans précédent de l'Empereur Haïlé Sélassié à la Société des Nations, les révélations surprenantes concernant les installations militaires soviétiques en Somalie, l'établissement d'un Gouvernement marxiste à Addis Abéba, la contre-offensive des troupes cubaines dans l'Ogaden et le rejet des forces soviétiques de la Somalie, tous ces événements à sensation ont fait les manchettes des journaux et attiré l'attention du monde entier.

Bien que tous reconnaissent l'importance stratégique de la Corne de l'Afrique et que les superpuissances s'en disputent le contrôle, on ne comprend toujours pas pourquoi cette région est demeurée instable pendant si longtemps.

L'auteur tente de remédier à ce manque de renseignements lamentable en nous donnant un excellent aperçu des facteurs multiples qui ont causé le climat d'instabilité politique pratiquement ininterrompu que connaît cette région. L'héritage de la juridiction impérialiste, avec son manque d'égards total envers les composantes ethniques, religieuses, tribales et historiques du pays est d'une importance fondamentale. L'interprétation du passé et les prévisions de l'auteur en ce qui concerne l'avenir de cette région se fondent sur sa conception des facteurs historiques.

## FOREWORD

The author, Maj Abdi Gawido, joined the Somali Armed Forces as an officer cadet in 1960. On completion of training at the Italian Military Academy he was commissioned and took up regimental duties in Mogadiscio. In 1964, he was selected for training in Tashkent on Soviet equipment scheduled for delivery to Somalia. On completion of this phase of training, he was assigned to various operational training establishments in Somalia. In 1967, Major Gawido was chosen to attend the University of Modena in Italy where in 1970 he received a Dottore in Giurisprudenza.

Instead of being posted to the newly formed Judge Advocate's Branch, Major Gawido was assigned to the Directorate of Training at the Headquarters of the Somali Forces where his duties related primarily to the training procedures and tactics required by the Somali forces following the acquisition of weaponry from the USSR. In this capacity Major Gawido worked closely with the Soviet Liaison and Training Staffs. These duties led to perceived differences of opinion with the foreign staffs and culminated in his arrest and detention. On release from custody, Major Gawido made his way to Kenya and later to Italy. He is now a landed immigrant in Canada, and is learning English.

Major Gawido has maintained close links with Somalia through immigrant colleagues. His unique background, experience and access to these colleagues led to an invitation to speak at an ORAE Seminar on the subject of the Horn of Africa. For those who were unable to attend his presentation, the attached should provide an unusual insight into a Somali's perception of developments in a critical area.

INDEX

THE PROSPECTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA - A SOMALI'S PERCEPTION

	<u>Page No.</u>
ABSTRACT .....	i
SOMMAIRE .....	iii
FOREWORD .....	v
FIGURE I - THE HORN OF AFRICA .....	ix
I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	1
II. <u>BACKGROUND AND CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT</u> .....	2
A. The European Interests .....	2
B. The Ethiopian Shadow .....	4
C. The Somali Territorial Claims .....	5
D. The Counter-action of the Ethiopians and Kenyans .....	9
E. The Eritrean Issue .....	9
III. <u>THE SOURCE OF ALTERNATE AID - THE USSR AND HER OBJECTIVES IN THE HORN</u> .....	11
IV. <u>SIGNIFICANT AREA ISSUES</u> .....	12
A. The Role of Personality, Power Bases and Ethnic Groups .....	12
B. The Problems of Human Rights .....	14
V. <u>THE CURRENT ISSUE - THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ATTEMPTED RESOLUTIONS</u> .....	18
VI. <u>THE PRESENT SITUATION</u> .....	20
VII. <u>CONCLUSION</u> .....	22
FOOTNOTES .....	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	25

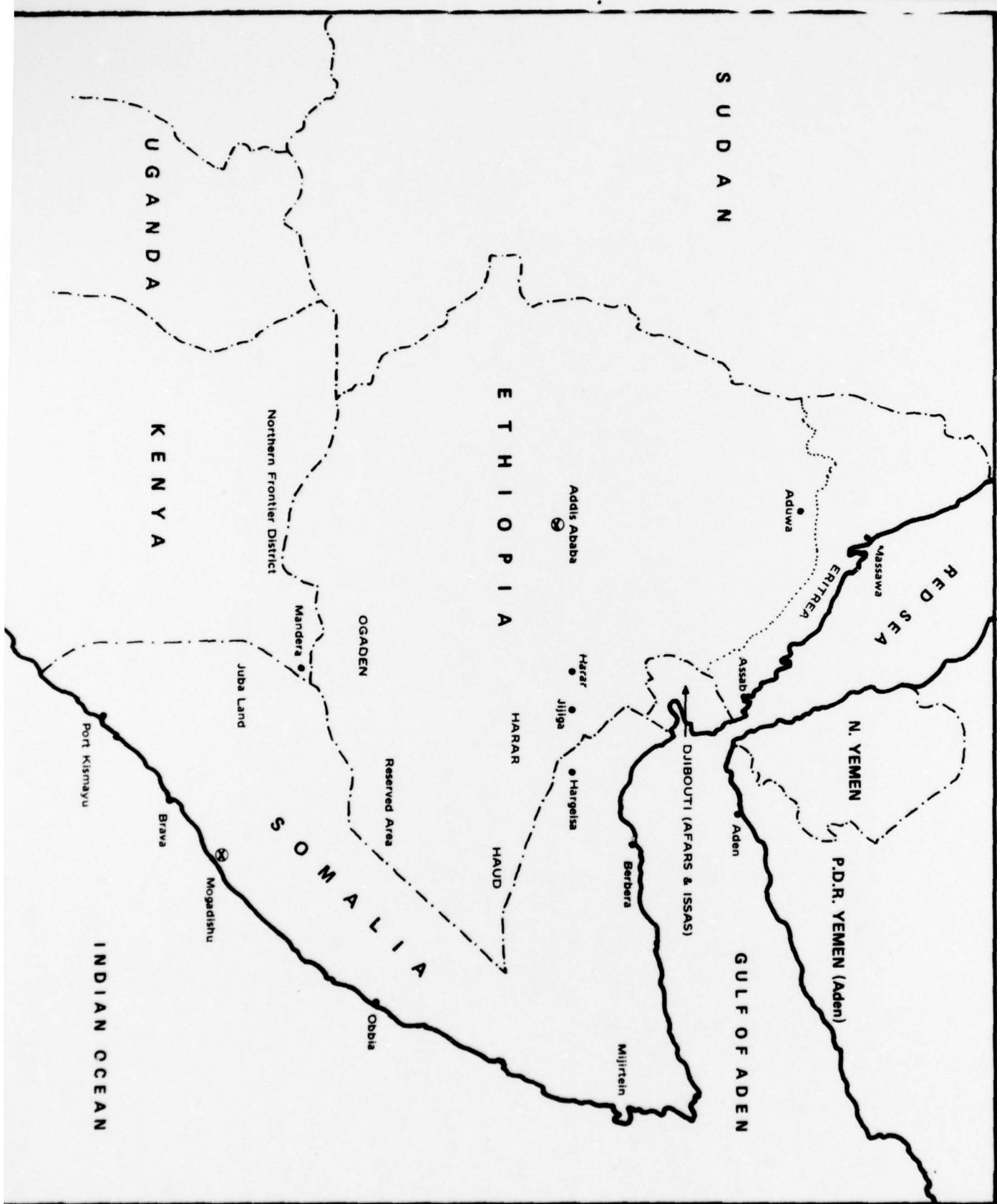


FIGURE 1.  
THE HORN OF AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The Horn of Africa, which is mostly occupied by the Somali Democratic Republic, stretches from the Equator to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is located in a strategic position considered vital to the superpowers.
2. The problems of the Horn of Africa cannot be separated from the problems of its component parts such as Ethiopia, Djibouti (the former territory of French Somaliland and recently of Afars and Issas) Eritrea, Kenya, Southern Yemen (Aden), the Arab Peninsula, the Suez Canal and the Somali Democratic Republic. The vested interests of the major powers play a significant role in contributing to the shift of alliances of the nations in the area. Rivalry is increased as the Arab Peninsula, Persia and the Western Bloc defend their established area "rights" and oppose the newly established Soviet presence and USSR objectives in the Horn of Africa.
3. Violent domestic changes in the Horn of Africa from 1969 to the present time have affected international and regional balances of power, and superpower disagreements have added further dimension to the problems inherent in this area. Shifts of alliances are likely to continue and the Cold War may well heat up again.
4. The Somali Republic's territorial claims, its internal differences and the Eritrean secession efforts are disruptive factors which deserve attention of the world powers and the Organization for African Unity (OAU). It is only by such international action that a just and permanent peace settlement can be achieved.

BACKGROUND AND CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

A. The European Interests

5. The present conflict in the Horn of Africa is caused mainly by territorial claims and boundary disputes. These stem primarily from European self-interest during the dismemberment of Africa determined by those attending the Berlin Talks in the 1880's. The resultant conflicts are most likely to continue, unless the basic injustices are corrected.

6. The Horn of Africa, which is mostly occupied by the Somali Republic, has always attracted the attention of world powers. Because of its strategic position, which is vital to the super-powers, the Horn is a good base from which to monitor and control the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

7. After the opening of the Canal in 1869, Britain secured the Gulf of Aden and Berbera, the French took the port of Djibouti, and Italy conquered the port of Assab. All these facilities are on the Red Sea.

8. Egypt and Turkey were driven back by European powers, and the indigenous resistance, by the Mahdists in Sudan and the Darwishes in Somalia, was overcome by Britain. The Horn of Africa was colonized by European powers, with the exception of the Ethiopian Empire which defeated Italian aggression at Adawa in 1869. The modern Italian army was beaten by barefooted, ill-armed Ethiopians. As a result of that victory, Ethiopia gained diplomatic recognition and respect. It signed treaties with Italy and Britain. The latter ceded Ethiopia 37,000 square miles of Somali territory previously under British "protection". Ethiopia on its part, recognized, the status quo of the area west of the main interior of Hargeisa.<sup>1</sup>

9. Altogether, four treaties were signed in the scramble for the Somali territory. These were the Treaty of Protection between Britain and Somalia in 1884-1886; the Treaty of Protection of 1896 concerning the Ogaden region of the Somali territory; the Treaty of Protection between France and Issa Somalis of 1889; and the Treaty of Protection between Italy and the Sultan of Mijirtein of 1889.

10. In 1905, Italy by agreement with Britain purchased the coast of Somaliland. Warshekh and Brava were given colonial status. In 1925, Jubaland was ceded by Britain to Italy.<sup>2</sup> In 1925, the independant Kingdom of Somali-Majerten was subjugated by Italian forces despite resistance.

11. The situation remained static until 1935, when Italy again attacked Ethiopia. This time, unlike the Aduwa attack, Italy put more modern weaponry, including tanks and poison gas, into their effort. As many as 40,000 Eritreans and Somali recruits were drafted into the Italian forces. Ethiopia was defeated and Italy became the master of the Horn of Africa until World War II.

12. With the collapse of the Mussolini forces, Britain replaced Italy and administered the whole area of East Africa including the Horn (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Aden). The British Government restored Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to his throne and gave the Ogaden, the Reserved Area and Haud (Somali grazing territories) to Ethiopia. Violent demonstrations in Hargeisa revealed the depth of Somali feeling aroused by the return to Ethiopia of the Reserved Area.<sup>3</sup> Britain was accused of betraying the Somali Treaty of 1884-1886. Since then, the shadow of Ethiopia has hung over the Ogaden of Somalia and over Eritrea.

B. The Ethiopian Shadow

13. Ethiopia has a unique position in African history. It is the only Black African state which has preserved 2,000 years of sovereignty. While other nations in Africa were the victims of white aggression and colonization, Ethiopia was victorious over a number of invaders. The Egyptian and Turkish efforts in 1876 and 1880 were resisted and overcome, and the Italian defeat at Aduwa called world attention to Ethiopia. Emperor Tewodros wrote a letter to England in which he stated: "I know the tactics of European governments when they desire to acquire an eastern state. First, they send missionaries, then consuls to support the missionaries, and then battalions to support the consuls. I am not a Rajah of Hindustan to be made a mock of in that way. I prefer to deal with battalions straight away".<sup>4</sup>

14. Thus, the image of Ethiopia was high as opposed to other African states which had been subdued by European colonizers. Emperor Haile Selassie's image was no less impressive than that of his predecessors in the international arena. His resistance to Fascist aggression won him a world-wide reputation. At the League of Nations he made an impressive speech which proved embarrassing to the major powers. In his address to the Assembly for Collective Security he said, "today it is us, tomorrow it is you". Post-war events gained Ethiopia further international respect. It supported the UN decision and sent troops to Korea in 1951. Ethiopia also assigned troops to the Congo in 1963. It hosted a meeting of thirty African Heads of State, which resulted in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, became the seat of the OAU and its permanent Secretariat. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa was also based in the Ethiopian capital.

C. The Somali Territorial Claims

15. Somalia, the major historical opponent of Ethiopia, was less known in the international forum. This was largely for two reasons. Firstly, Somalia became independent only in 1960. Secondly, there were only two Somali movements to gain international attention.

16. The Darvish movement which was created by Sheik Mohamed Abdulla Hassan began around 1897. The Sheik then challenged Britian, Italy, Ethiopia, and the Somali Mijirtein Kingdoms at Benderkassim and Obbia. His epic poems called for national unity, his messianic preaching to the Darvishes and his unscrupulous ruthlessness won him long-lasting undisputed one-man rule and order. Sheil Mohamed Abdulla Hassan, (identified as "The Mad Mullah" by Jardine Douglass), described Somaliland as follows: "if the country Somalia was cultivated, or contained houses or property, it would be worth your while to fight...if you want wood or stone you can get them in plenty. There are also many dung heaps. The sun is very hot. All you can get from me is war, nothing else".<sup>5</sup> The Darvish movement was defeated in 1921 at Taleh.

17. Another movement, that of the Somali Youth League, was responsible to a large extent for Somali independence. Somalia was created on July 1, 1960 through the union of British Somaliland and the former Italian Somaliland Protectorate. The Somali nation supported the scheme of a greater Somalia which included the proposed incorporation of French Somaliland (formerly Djibouti), the Somali northern frontier of Kenya and the Somali Ogaden which was then occupied by Ethiopia. Somalia's territorial claims were enumerated clearly when President Aden Abdulla Osman made a speech in Addis Ababa to the OAU in May 1963 in which he said:

"...The Somalia people in Ogaden and NFD (Ogaden, Reserved Area, Houd, and the Somali North Frontier

District of Kenya Mandera, Marsabit, Moyale, Wajer, Garrisa, Sielo) are a nation in every sense of the word. They are inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity and distinguished from other like groups by their racial origin and characteristics. It is constituted by inborn qualities which render it indisputable...and share common religion...the haphazard partition of Somali grazing lands by Britain, Italy, France and Ethiopia towards the end of the nineteenth century separates, quite literally, brother from brother by a series of artificial and often disputed frontiers which Somalis as nomads have to cross".<sup>6</sup>

18. These Somali territorial claims were largely ignored by the world powers. As a consequence independent action was necessary. Somalia backed and encouraged guerrilla activity against Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as terrorism against the French authority in Djibouti.

19. In 1976, the Somali Front for Liberation of the Somali Coast (FLCS) kidnapped thirteen children of French servicemen. The children were rescued after a bloody operation. The FLCS, nevertheless, demanded immediate and unconditional independence for Djibouti.<sup>7</sup> Further incidents occurred. Jean Gueury, a French envoy to the Somali capital, was kidnapped in March 1975 at Mogadishu. The kidnappers asked for the release of two Somali FLCS, who were in prison in France, and also demanded a ransom of £41,000 in gold. Both demands were met in exchange for Jean Gueury.<sup>8</sup> Similar tactics continued until the full independence of French Somaliland (now the Republic of Afars and Issas) was achieved.

20. The Somali territorial claim goes back to antiquity. In 1530, a Somali, Ahmed Gran (The Left-Handed), gained control of the main land of Harar and Jijiga for 10 years and threatened seriously the capital of Ethiopia. The siege was broken only when the sons of Vasco da Gama came to the rescue of the battered Ethiopian forces with a contingent of 400 well-armed Portuguese. Ahmed Gran was killed and the Somali contingent was defeated.

21. Since the 1890's, the Somali nation has been divided into British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Ethiopian Somaliland (Ogaden) and the Somali Frontier District of Kenya.

22. Britain held jurisdiction over the whole Horn of Africa after World War II and was responsible for the Somali partitions. It was the United Kingdom which gave Ogaden back to Ethiopia in 1948. Haud and the Reserved Area (Somali grazing land) were presented to Ethiopia in 1954-56. The Somalis protestations did not deter the British action.

23. Since 1960, the Somali government has attempted but failed to resolve the dispute through diplomatic action. Neither Kenya nor Ethiopia responded favourably to the Somali effort. Ethiopia resolutely defends with vituperative rhetoric its colonial control of Ogaden; it opposed the UN commission proposal to ascertain the Ogaden public opinion.

24. The Somali Northern Frontier District of Kenya, which had an administration separate from the rest of Kenya during the colonial era, was incorporated into Kenya in 1963. This occurred even though a British Commission ascertained that public opinion of the Northern Frontier District supported, by a ratio of five out of six, integration into the Somali Republic. Despite the Commission's report and the Somali government's concern, Britain announced in March 1963 that the Northern Frontier District would

become the seventh region of Kenya.

25. In protest, the Prime Minister of Somalia, Dr. Abdi Rashdi Ali Shermarke broke diplomatic relations with Britain in 1963, stating that Britain would be responsible for future trouble in the Horn of Africa. Abdirizak Haji Hussen, the hard line Prime Minister who replaced Dr. Shermarke, opted for a guerrilla war against Ethiopia, Kenya and French Somaliland.

26. Hostility continued until Prime Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Egal assumed power. In 1967, Mr. Egal defused the tension and omitted all references to Somali territorial claims. This action immensely pleased Kenya and Ethiopia. Mr. Egal urged political and social cooperation. The two governments agreed to respect each others' sovereignty and to examine possible solutions to "major and minor differences" between Kenya and Somalia.

27. At home, however, Mr. Egal met fierce opposition. Among the many problems facing Prime Minister Egal were demonstrations and political accusations of appeasement. Former Prime Minister Hussen argued that Egal's failure to demand recognition of Somali territorial claims was incompatible with Somali self-determination in the Northern Frontier District and in the Ogaden. Violence increased. It culminated in the assassination of the President (former Prime Minister Shermarke) and in the overthrow of Egal. The leader of the activists, General Mohamed Siad Barre, took over as Head of State and leader of the government. Guerrilla activity increased in the disputed areas; regular forces were committed to battle. The initial Somali successes led to Soviet and Cuban intervention in support of Ethiopia and the "Ogaden Fiasco" of 1977-78 during which the Somali forces were defeated.

28. The prospect for peace in the Horn of Africa is more unlikely than ever before. No peaceful settlement is in sight. Mohamed Siad Barre seems incapable of establishing any new method for

regional integration. He is neither able to create a confederation, nor to work out any alternate solution satisfactory to both sides. The erratic behaviour on the part of Ethiopia has not enhanced the chance for peace either.

D. The Counter-action of the Ethiopians and Kenyans

29. Ethiopia and Kenya both reacted to the Somali territorial claims; they signed a defence agreement for cooperation and mutual assistance in July 1963 against Somalia.

30. The Western Powers accepted the principle of the OAU Charter which paradoxically subscribes to the status quo. This is, in fact, the continued recognition of the artificial and colonial boundaries in Africa. This Western policy was not acceptable to the Somali nation; it only fostered enmity and hatred towards the West. It is necessary to emphasize that the root of the dispute between Ethiopia, Kenya and Somali is not a struggle for potential resources in the dispute area. Both the Somalia Ogaden of Ethiopia and the Somali Northern Frontier District of Kenya are barren deserts, devoid of exploitable raw material. Somalia's claim is based mainly on historical brotherly and national sentiments. Ethiopia and Kenya, on the other hand, are resolutely defending their (colonial established) sovereignty and statehood.

E. The Eritrean Issue

31. Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. It had a parliament, president, flag, constitution, trade unions, and local government. Authority and autonomy were gradually stripped through centralization of control by the late Emperor Haile Selassie.

32. In 1952, the Eritrean constitution was suspended. In 1955, the position of President was removed, in 1958 the National Assembly was dispersed, in 1959 the flag was abolished, and finally, during the same year the federation was declared to be null and void.

33. Eritreans have been carrying out guerrilla activities for thirteen years in opposition to the Ethiopian annexation. The Eritreans believe that they are on firm moral and legal ground to exist as a separate entity from Ethiopia. There are good grounds for their claim. In 1600, the Portugese arrived and identified an area called Madri Bahri which is now the modern Eritrea. Similarly, two centuries later Mr. Bruce, the British explorer, noted that both Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Madri Bahri (Eritrea) were separate entities.

34. Eritrea has been colonized by different foreign powers. Axum (the fourth century Ethiopian Empire) controlled it in the eighth century. In the nineteenth century Egypt, Italy and the Ottoman Turks gained control. In 1941, Britain obtained jurisdiction. A decade later Ethiopia extended her power over the area. This move was resisted by Eritreans. There are many similarities to the current situation. Eritrea is at present opposing what is interpreted by some to be massive genocide carried out by the Ethiopians and supported by USSR and Cuba.

35. Eritrea struggles to be a master of its own country. The ELF (Eritrean Liberation Front) and the EPLF (Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front) settled their differences. The Ethiopian total repression strengthened solidarity amongst Eritrean factions and ensured greater support for their demand for total independence.

THE SOURCE OF ALTERNATE AID -  
THE USSR AND HER OBJECTIVES IN THE HORN

36. Having explained the vested interests of the West and having established that Somalia could not receive aid from its regular suppliers, it is clear that Somalia had to find strong alternative allies to assist in achieving her aspirations and territorial claims. The USSR appeared to meet this need.

37. Somalia claimed the earlier identified territories and peoples on the basis of ethnicity, common language, religion, customs, possession of historical continuity and racial origin. These characteristics distinguished them from other peoples, and are indissoluble qualities. The Somali aim is to unify these nationals and to annex them to the Somali Republic. The Soviet objectives in the Horn are to expand her power and prestige, to negate the Western influence and to acquire strategic, military and economic advantages. Although these objectives are at variance with the Somali aims, in the short term they appeared compatible. Each side needed the support of the other.

38. To implement their design, the Soviets extended extensive military and economic aid to Somalia. In return Somalia signed a Friendship Treaty with the Soviets on June 11, 1974. The Soviets received special privileges and were guaranteed military bases at Berbera on the Red Sea and port facilities in Port Kismayo, and the Wanle Weyn airstrip forty miles from Mogadishu, the Somali capital. The West reacted. President Carter announced that he was prepared "to aggressively challenge, in a peaceful way of course, the Soviet Union and others for influence" in "crucial areas" like Somalia.<sup>9</sup>

SIGNIFICANT AREA ISSUES

39. There are several issues, not necessarily unique in developing areas, but nevertheless inherent in the Horn of Africa. They are problems which must be recognized, studied and resolved before any lasting solution to the instability of the area can be achieved. The issues include:

- A. The role of personality, power bases and ethnic groups, and
- B. The problem of human rights.

A. The Role of Personality, Power Bases and Ethnic Groups

40. In the Horn of Africa, the role of personality and the family clan play a decisive and determining role in domestic policy. The power base is constituted by the clan, sub-clan, genealogical descendents and the tribal affiliations. Critical positions are assigned according to the closeness to and kinship with the ruler.

41. Top advisors in both domestic and regional policy are a close family. Certain sensitive positions are assigned exclusively by tribal and clan affiliation. Pressure groups are also based on tribal links.

42. There is, however, a group interest which is not formed by exclusive tribal affiliation. There are some important positions which are held as "tokens" by other tribes which do not constitute a threat to the official regime.

43. However, the most important variables are the personality traits and idiosyncracies of the Heads of State. Their opinions

and the totality of knowledge which they perceive, influence the political life and course of their nation. Those Heads of State who came to power by force and rule by bayonet have had no formal education in political thought, sociology, psychology or in comparative studies of foreign policy. Their mere perception largely determines domestic and regional policies. No attention is paid to other variables important to the nation and politics, such as culture, public opinion, the size and wealth of the country, the governmental system, the political structure and other factors such as the neighbouring countries and their vested interests. The personality factor affects every branch of daily life. The roles of personality and tribalism are paternalistic and complementary to each other.

44. Tribalism, as I. M. Lewis pointed out, lies in kinship which is composed of men who trace descent through males to a common male ancestor from whom they take their corporate name. Political affiliations are in turn determined by genealogical relationships which are clan family, clan, sub-clan and lineage.

45. In Ethiopia, there are many ethnic tribes, however not all are important in the political life. The Amharas and Tigreans are the only dominant groups.

46. In Kenya, the Kikuya and Luos make up the two primary groups in political life. However, the Kikuyu have held elite power since independence was achieved in 1963.

47. In Somalia before the coup d'etat, power alternated and complicated alliances contributed to the balance of power. However, after the coup the Marehan, a small minority tribe within the Darob tribe, monopolized power. It allied with the other two Darob groups, the Dulbahantes and the Ogaden. These three feud

with other ethnic groups such as the Issak, Hawiye, and Majerten. Unless the above matters are given full consideration, developments in the area will remain confused.

B. Problems of Human Rights

48. Difficulties concerning human rights are not confined to Somalia alone. Suppression of liberty is also characteristic of the present situation in Ethiopia. Resolution of both problems is a prerequisite to the negotiation of issues contributing to area instability.

49. In October 1969, a military coup d'état took place in Somalia. In 1964, a military takeover had also taken place in Ethiopia. In the beginning, both regimes were popular. Reforms in land distribution, education, health and in the economic sector were carried out. Then, suddenly, all hopes were dashed. Promises for a better life and justice proved to be an illusion.

50. Summary executions, mass arrests, abuses of power and denials of justice became institutionalized. Fundamental human rights were violated by the two juntas. In Ethiopia, sixty political detainees were executed without trial. Subsequently, many other officials met the same fate. Hundreds of ordinary people and students became political targets. There was permanent war between factions which held different political and ethnic views.

51. The Somali military junta also excelled in the violation of the Convention of Human Rights. The Somali people can not and do not subscribe to the State Department Reports of the 95th Congress, 2nd Session, February 3, 1978, submitted to the Committee on International Relations (U.S. House of Representatives) and the

Committee on Foreign Relations (U.S. Senate); the report tends to distort the issues. The evidence is clear.

52. In 1972, the Vice-President General Mohamed Ainashe, the Minister of Defence General Salad Gaveire Kadiye and Lt. Col. Abdulkadir Del Islam were executed summarily after a marathon "show" trial. Many army officers, high ranking officials, and civilians were sentenced harshly; life sentences were common. In 1975, ten religious authorities were executed for expressing concern over the administration's apparent failure to adhere to the Muslim faith.

53. Torture is employed to extract confessions. Abdullahi Issa Iiglamen was killed in custody; a bayonet was used to cut arteries of his throat. Muse Botan Elmi's genitals and ribs were crushed while in detention; he died. Others were subjected to starvation, beating, mutilation and injections causing hysteria. Those who survive bear the indelible signs of torture.

54. There are exceptions and some members of the former government were treated well in detention. However, they were not perceived to be a threat to the junta. They were held in a presidential villa at Afgoi. Others are not so fortunate. Most political detainees in Somalia are kept incommunicado.

55. An air of tension and suspicion prevails. The 20,000 strong National Security (NS) is run by Barre's son-in-law, Ahmed Suleiman Dafle. The NS, which includes Barre's wife on its senior staff, uses terror to enforce security. Siad Barre has decreed that all Somalis will monitor each other and report to the NS. Husband, wives and children are included in this directive. Those who refuse are labelled reactionary and imperialist lackeys and detained without trial.

Among the more senior of the many political detainees are:

Former Prime Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Egal

Former General Mohamed Abshir Musa

Abdullahi Farah Holif, Former Ambassador

Ysuf M. Berdead

Mohamed Hagi Dirie

Siad Dirie Dawre

Abdi Farah Bashane

Abdullahi Yusuf Hagi

Abdullahi Shek (Godob)

56. In April 1978, about four thousand additional suspects were arrested because of their tribal affiliations. Most of these are Majertens. Genocide is expected. The situation is deteriorating; murder in the name of justice prevails. For example, after the Somali defeat in the Ogaden war, Siad Barre executed summarily 80 army officers who had been critical of his 'misjudgement'.<sup>10</sup>

57. The violation of human rights had become routine in Somalia. The decrees, issued by the Somalian government, entitled "Tutela Della Sicurezza Nazionale", L. 10 Settembre 1970, N.54 and "Potere di Fermo", L.10 Gennaio 1970, No. 1<sup>11</sup> are in fundamental violation of the 1948 U. N. Convention.

58. Specifically, the following rights are consistently denied:

- 1) The right to liberty and security of persons;
- 2) The right to freedom of movement;
- 3) The right to a fair trial;
- 4) The right to privacy, (home and correspondence);
- 5) The right to freedom of speech, association and peaceful assembly;
- 6) The right to participate in the political life of the country.

59. In addition, the regime has implemented laws (made by decree and applied retroactively) to justify its illegal actions.

60. These are facts, not fiction. And as facts, they should be the primary consideration for all foreign governments before any decisions are made regarding area problem resolution and support for Mohamed Siad Barre.

THE CURRENT ISSUE -  
THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ATTEMPTED RESOLUTIONS

61. In 1977, the situation in the Horn took a course unpalatable to Moscow. As a direct result, President Podgorny and Prime Minister Fidel Castro made a hurried visit to the area in April 1977 in an attempt to resolve the deteriorating Somali-Ethiopian relations.

62. The USSR was concerned both over the worsening Somali-Ethiopian situation and over the Egyptian, Sudanese and Saudi Arabian pronouncements on making the Red Sea an "Arab Lake". To counter both, President Podgorny and Prime Minister-Castro made a hasty proposal to federate the three Marxist regimes of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Southern Yemen (Aden). The proposal failed because of the Somali Republic territorial claims regarding Ogaden and the Ethiopian refusal to make concessions in this dispute.

63. In this stalemate situation Soviet vested interests were at stake. The USSR sphere of influence of fourteen years in Somalia was threatened. The prospect did not please the USSR. It had established military bases and port facilities in Somalia and also exercised considerable political, military, economic and cultural influence. The Soviets sought an opportunity to maintain close relationships with Somalia and with Ethiopia by supplying arms to both states. That gamble did not succeed. It ended the close relationship that had existed between Somalia and the USSR. The Soviets underestimated the importance of the Somali plan for Greater Somalia, and failed to understand that the Government of Somalia thought that time was ripe for action.

64. The Somali government fully backed the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). In July 1977, the Somali forces launched

a major attack which drove back the 3rd Ethiopian Division. Within a short period of time, all of the Ogaden desert was in the hands of the Somali regime.

65. TASS reflected Soviet concern regarding the Somali-Ethiopia conflict and reported that regular Somali armed forces were involved in the war. The Soviets identified Somalia as the aggressor. That perception further affected deteriorating Soviet-Somali relations. On November 13, 1977, Somalia ordered all Soviet advisors to leave the country within one week. The Somali government also broke diplomatic relations with Havana. as a reciprocal act against Cuban intervention in the Horn in favour of Ethiopia.

66. The USSR sided with Ethiopia, introducing new weaponry into the area. Experienced Soviet and Cuban senior officers assisted the Ethiopians to turn the tide. Somali armed forces were driven back to the former border in humiliation. The result was a major triumph for Moscow, Havana and Addis Ababa.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

67. The current political situation in the Horn of Africa is relatively calm. The Soviets and Cubans have acted to restore the status quo with the blessing of the U.S.A. The Soviets, however, have benefited. Their military position in Southern Yemen (Aden) will be enhanced should the USSR acquire port facilities at Assab and Massawa in Eritrea. These would be linked with the air base which is being built outside Addis Ababa and the already operational Al Kufra air base in Libya and Kormaksar in Aden. The future of Djibouti is in doubt. It could be a victim of revenge by the Ethiopian army which is expanding its area of influence. The Eritrean determination to resist is likely to fade if the scope of the intervention by the Soviets and Cubans is maintained.

68. The Somali situation is the worst of all. Never popular, President Siad Barre has fallen even lower in public esteem since the Somali defeat over Ogaden in March 1978. Somalia's foreign policy is more confused than ever before. For example, Siad Barre vowed not to cease guerrilla warfare against Ethiopia. However, the Somalis informed the U.S. Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, that they "would no longer seek to change their borders by the use of force as they had in the Ogaden". Since that date, renewed fighting has been reported.

69. The Russians are currently out of favour in Somalia. However, the Western powers are also much disliked by the government because they did not back Somalia in its war against Ethiopia. President Barre is attempting to avoid the responsibility for defeat and to blame the major powers, and is increasingly critical of the Western inaction.

70. It is the contention of many analysts who have studied the personality traits of Barre that he might be planning a renewed alliance with Moscow. The reason given is the increasing domestic repression within Somalia. This repression, which he must impose to retain power, may well require Soviet assistance.

CONCLUSION

71. There remains the basic problem of whether permanent peace will ever come to the Horn of Africa. Related questions that deserve attention include:

- (1) To what extent will Soviet and Cuban interests and intervention in the area lead to solutions satisfactory to all the parties involved in the area of controversy?
- (2) Could a prolonged dispute in the Horn lead to a confrontation between the major or even the minor powers such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Iran, and Kenya?
- (3) How long and to what extent will the Marxist government of Somalia be able to maintain relationships with the conservative Arabs and the West?
- (4) Do the West Somali Liberation Front and Eritrean Secession movement qualify for self-determination, and to whose benefit is the maintenance of the status quo? Does the revision of the OAU Charter exacerbate the African conflict or ease differences?
- (5) Can the destruction of human rights in Somalia be tolerated by the civilized world?

72. As a Somali, my perception is that no peaceful solution is in sight. The internal situation in Somalia is unacceptable. Essentially, the struggle will continue unless the Somali territorial claims and Eritrean secession movements are seriously considered by the super powers and efforts are made to resolve both issues. Failure to take such action could lead to direct confrontation between the super powers. The West, to avoid the

possibility of such escalation, could leave the indigenous people of the Horn under the domination of the USSR. Both possibilities are abhorrent to this Somali.

Footnotes

1. T. Farer, War Clouds On The Horn Of Africa, p. 57
2. Ibid. p. 59
3. I. M. Lewis, A Pastoral Democracy, p. 242
4. T. Farer, War Clouds On The Horn Of Africa, p. 61
5. Ibid., p. 61
6. K. Hoskyns, The Ethiopia-Somali-Kenya Dispute, pp. 32-33
7. Africa Diary, March 1975, p. 7855
8. Africa Diary, April 1975, pp. 7401-7402
9. News Week, September 26, 1977, p. 43
10. The Economist, Coup Countered, Vol 267, April 15, 1978
11. Codidici e le leggi Penali Somali 1973, p.p. 747-749 p.810

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## KEY WORDS

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