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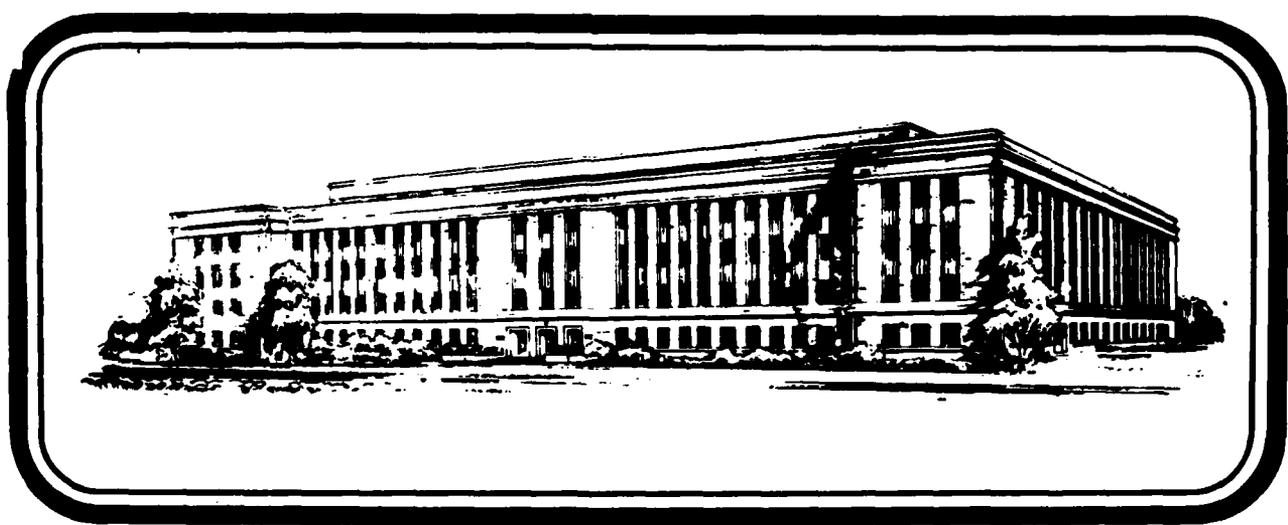


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**SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA:  
A MODEL FOR POTENTIAL UNITED STATES  
EXPLOITATION?**



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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE  
THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES  
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC STUDY

SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA:  
A MODEL FOR POTENTIAL UNITED STATES EXPLOITATION?

by

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Research Supervisor: Lieutenant Colonel William G. Isom, USA

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Joseph P. O'Neill, Department of State, has served in Southeast Asia for 15 years, as well as in India and Portugal. In addition to his normal consular duties, he has been involved in reporting on insurgencies and/or political affairs in these countries. His next assignment will be as Counselor for Political Affairs at the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Mr. O'Neill is a graduate of the National War College, Class of 1983.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study attempts to discern if Soviet involvement in the Third World follows a predictable, orderly plan. The methodology used was to examine Soviet involvement in Somalia and Ethiopia, two countries in which Moscow had or has a large political investment. Specifically, we have attempted to ascertain: (a) what conditions are necessary for the USSR to make a move and what the initial moves are likely to be, (b) reasons for Soviet actions, and (c) operating methods when the Soviets find themselves in positions of influence. Finally, suggestions are posited regarding how the United States might be more effective in countering the Soviet Union in the Third World.

Soon after the 1955 Bandung Conference of African and Asian States, the Soviets decided to exploit independence movements in colonial Africa. Among the goals and objectives of Soviet foreign policy declared in the Soviet constitution of 1977 are continued support of peoples struggling for national liberation and social progress. One area of recent Soviet activity which has great strategic value is the Horn of Africa--specifically, Somalia and Ethiopia. That both the United States and the Soviet Union should vie for influence in this area is obvious when one considers the West's continued requirements for access to the resources of Africa and Southwest Asia.

Ethiopia was an American stronghold from the end of World War II into the early 1970s. The overthrow of the imperial regime, however, coupled with a significant cutback of U.S. military support in the early 1970s, resulted in an "influence vacuum" which the USSR has exploited since 1977.

Somalia, enduring an uncertain start after gaining independence in 1960, underwent a military coup in 1969. Refused support by the United States, Somalia turned to the Soviet Union, which willingly provided military and economic support until Somalia broke its ties with the USSR in 1977.

This study examines the three basic parts of the Soviet model--economic, political, and military actions--for involvement in the Third World through a detailed study of Moscow's initiatives and actions in both Ethiopia and Somalia. It is postulated that from the study of these two countries, one can reasonably extrapolate to likely Soviet activities in other areas of the Third World.

The study revealed that Soviet initiatives and activities in Somalia and Ethiopia were remarkably similar. Despite the fact that political interactions with the two countries were nearly identical, it appears the Soviets assessed the situation in Ethiopia as more illustrative of a "true revolution" in the Marxist-Leninist sense. This fact may also be reflected by the significantly larger amounts of military aid provided to Ethiopia. It is clear that Moscow's commitment to Addis Ababa has been

greater than its earlier commitment to Mogadishu. Finally, in the economic support area, both countries received minimal assistance from the USSR. This probably reflects an important Soviet weakness in this area and may provide a fruitful arena for U.S. exploitation in the future.

The Soviet approaches to Ethiopia and Somalia were nearly identical. Those differences in approach which do exist, however, reflect a requirement to accommodate existing infrastructure or refinements to a common Soviet strategy. Once the Soviets decide to support a Third World regime, they can be expected to respond rapidly with arms and other military equipment. Overt political actions such as reciprocal high-level visits and friendship treaties, continued military aid, and limited economic assistance will follow. Displaying a high degree of pragmatism and patience, Moscow will attempt to achieve its ultimate goal--the formation of a mass-based communist ruling party with strong ties to the Soviet Union.

The study resulted in several recommendations which could, if successfully implemented in whole or in part, help pre-empt Soviet influence in other Third World regions of significant interest to the United States. These recommendations are:

--that the U.S. not attempt to compete with the USSR in being the sole supplier of military combat equipment.

--that the U.S. recognize that its major advantage over the USSR lies in the economic arena.

--that the U.S. attach political strings to its aid.

--that the U.S. seek support and cooperation in providing coordinated aid and assistance to Third World countries.

--that the Department of State continue contact with both host governments and significant opposition movements in Third World countries.

--that the U.S. use aid, propaganda, and diplomatic contacts to provide Third World countries with the ability to play an American/Western card.

--that the U.S. revitalize its Information Agency's Leader Grant and Exchange Visitor programs.

--that U.S. information activities in the Third World be increased.

--that the U.S. step up efforts to acquire a major stockpile of replacement parts for Soviet military equipment which could be made available to Third World nations.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

There is a continuing debate on the meaning or significance of the Soviet Union's actions in the Third World. Discussions usually center on whether Soviet moves are motivated solely by geostrategic considerations, expansionism, ideology, or efforts to gain influence or--more importantly--international recognition as a military and political superpower with global reach. One observer contends that the Soviet Union, albeit prematurely, publicly announced itself as a global power in 1971, when Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko stated in a speech before the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), "There is no question of any significance which can be decided without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it." Having said this, the observer further postulates that it is just this insistence on the part of the Soviet Union which gives more than just casual insight into Soviet foreign policy. Rather than being reactive and passive, "The Soviet Union responds to targets of opportunity, it often creates its own opportunities, and it behaves in the absence of opportunities." (1)

In various U.S. foreign policy fora, a lack of understanding and certainty regarding Soviet intentions and actions in the

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(1) Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Global Power and the Correlation of Forces," Problems of Communism, May-June 1980, p. 1.

Third World is evident. It has been implied that although U.S. policy makers have a good understanding of general Soviet strategies, they are very uncertain concerning Soviet intentions to act or react in a given situation in the Third World.

This paper analyzes and compares the approaches of the Soviet Union to Somalia and Ethiopia, two countries in which the Soviets had and have a large political and military investment. The political and economic conditions--as well as the military concerns--present within each of these countries at the time Soviet advances began in earnest are typical of conditions and concerns in many Third World countries today. Therefore, in ascertaining (a) what conditions were present when the USSR made its moves in Ethiopia and Somalia, (b) what these moves were, (c) the reasons for these moves, and (d) Soviet operating methods, it should be possible to determine whether or not the Soviets follow a predictably orderly plan. If so, the authors believe that given the opportunity in other Third World countries, the Soviet Union can be expected to employ this model when it is in its interests to do so. By identifying the shortcomings of any Soviet approach, this paper will also suggest how the United States might be more successful in countering such Soviet initiatives.

## CHAPTER II

### SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

According to the Soviet constitution adopted on 7 October 1977, the basis of Soviet foreign policy is set forth as follows:

The foreign policy of the USSR is aimed at ensuring international conditions favorable for building communism in the USSR, safeguarding the state interests of the Soviet Union, consolidating the positions of world socialism, supporting the struggle of peoples for national liberation and social progress, preventing wars of aggression, achieving universal and complete disarmament, and consistently implementing the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.(2)

Both before and since the enunciation of these lofty ideals, Soviet foreign policy has sought both the furtherance of the USSR's national interests and the acquisition of international co-equality with the United States. With these goals and objectives in mind, Ethiopia and Somalia must be considered in terms of their susceptibility as well as their usefulness to Soviet foreign policy advances.

Ideological considerations began to appear in the 1950's as colonialism in Africa waned and independence movements appeared. Soon after the 1955 Bandung Conference of African and Asian States, the Soviets decided to exploit the independence movements in Africa while at the same time seizing the opportunity to chal-

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(2) Quoted *ibid.*, p. 3.

leage "imperialistic" influence on the continent.(3)

Certainly, no one can argue against the geostrategic value of these two countries. Indeed, a cursory review of the map of the region, with sea lines of communication and strategic resources overlaid, provides a good justification for any major power to seek influence in the area. A major presence in the Horn of Africa or in the littoral countries of the southern Red Sea could allow control of the lines of communication west and south from the Persian Gulf. Current U.S. foreign policy objectives for the region are quite clear in this regard; they are designed to achieve the overall goal of reducing security threats to, and maintaining stability in, the area.(4) Through the 1970s, however, U.S. policy toward the Horn was driven by three concerns: ". . . maintaining access to Kagnew Station, opposing Soviet presence in the Horn and the Red Sea, and developing a policy toward Africa."(5)

Accepting the geostrategic attractiveness of the Horn to both the United States and the Soviet Union, what were the conditions within Somalia and Ethiopia which first attracted the Soviets, and what political, economic, and military overtures did they make?

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(3) Raymond N. Copson, Africa: Soviet/Cuban Role, Issue Brief IB 78077, The Library of Congress/Congressional Research Service, 15 August 1978, updated 20 May 1979.

(4) Chester A. Crocker, Challenge to Regional Security in Africa: The U.S. Response, United States Department of State, Current Policy No. 431, 28 October 1982, pp. 3-4.

(5) Marina Ottaway, Soviet and American Influence in the Horn of Africa (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 162.

CHAPTER III  
COUNTRY SETTING

An examination of the conditions present in each of the two countries at the time Soviet advances began in earnest provides insight into what circumstances the Soviets might find attractive elsewhere in the Third World.

A. Ethiopia

At the end of World War II, Emperor Haile Selassie was trying to use his "moral strength" as the oldest enemy of fascism to consolidate his hold over the diverse ethnic groups making up his empire. In the South, he took control of the disputed area of the Ogaden despite the strenuous but futile objections of the soon-to-be-formed government of Somalia. In the North, he was able to reassert Ethiopian rule over the Eritreans, who wanted either independence or substantial autonomy; Ethiopia's incorporation of Eritrea, which was accomplished with U.S. and British acquiescence, defused a Soviet request for a United Nations trusteeship over the former Italian colony.

Consonant with the stated Soviet policy of aiding peoples seeking national liberation, support of the Eritrean independence movement by the USSR, its East European allies, and Cuba was evi-

dent in the late 1960s.(6) Overt Soviet involvement and large-scale support were thwarted by the active U.S. role in Ethiopia from the end of World War II through the early 1970s, as the United States protected its important Kagnaw Station communications base in Eritrea and its loyal friend, the Emperor. This U.S. support, which was both economic and military, allowed the Emperor's autocratic but generally benign rule to continue. Concurrently, Ethiopian bureaucratic inefficiency, endemic corruption, and lack of contact with or interest in the people festered.

Added to this litany of political incompetence was a disastrous drought in 1973. As a matter of national pride, the government refused to ask for international aid to alleviate the famine resulting from the drought and was reluctant to accept aid when it was offered; when received, the aid was either stolen or not distributed efficiently. As a result, tens of thousands of Ethiopians died, and many believe that this massive ineptitude and corruption were the breaking point for whatever popular support remained for the Emperor's regime.(7) In January 1974, army mutinies broke out in Asmara, and others followed in Harrar and Addis Ababa. Once rioting began, it was unstoppable, tearing apart the remnants of the fabric of the Emperor's regime; the deposition of Haile Selassie became only a question of time. The

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(6)William M. LeoGrande, Cuba's Policy in Africa, 1959-1980 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, c1980), p. 42.

(7)Colin Legum, The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire (New York: Africana Publishing, 1975), p.3 .

Emperor was forced to abdicate by the military in September 1974, only a month after the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee (or "Dergue," as it became known from the Amharic word for "Committee") had forced out of office Ethiopia's last civilian government. One member of the Dergue was Major Mengistu Haile Mariam. He began his rise slowly in the jockeying for power within the Dergue. With the eventual bloody disposal of both enemies and some supporters, he consolidated his power by early 1977. Coincident with Mengistu's rise during the 1974-1977 timeframe, the Soviet Union again began to show interest in Ethiopia.(8) (Prior to 1974, the USSR had maintained only a modest political and economic presence there.)

From 1974 to 1977, the United States gradually decreased its official presence in Ethiopia. Kagnev Station was no longer considered an essential installation; indeed, it had become more of a burden than an asset, as several American personnel were kidnapped by Eritrean "liberation" forces who sought both publicity for their cause and an end to U.S. military aid to Addis Ababa. American budgetary constraints resulted in aid money that might otherwise have been available for Ethiopia being diverted to other recipients. Relations between Ethiopia and the United States came close to a formal break in 1977 following U.S. criticism of Ethiopia over human rights issues, the confiscation of American property without compensation, and the expulsion from

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(3) Morris Rothenberg, The USSR and Africa (Coral Gables, FL: Center for Advanced International Studies, Miami University, 1980), p. 148.

Addis Ababa of the U.S. ambassador. A definite low point was reached in 1977, when the U.S. finally cut off all sales and grants of military aid to Ethiopia.

It would appear that it was the vacuum created by the lack of U.S. military aid and the political controversy between Ethiopia and the United States over a number of bilateral issues which allowed the USSR the opportunity to improve its relations with Ethiopia. (See Chapter IV for a discussion of Soviet initiatives and activities.)

#### B. Somalia

Unlike Ethiopia, Somalia is ethnically homogenous. After gaining independence under United Nations auspices in 1960, Somalia attempted to organize around an Italian concept of representative government. Because of the many clan relationships and the shortcomings of the individuals involved in the government, corruption quickly became apparent. Factional disputes arose between the irredentists who preached the importance of national unification with the ethnic Somalis who lived across the borders in Ethiopia and Kenya and those who wanted instead to pursue programs of internal economic and social development. These disputes were neutralized at least through 1969, and attempts to modernize proceeded under the democratically structured government of President Shermanke. Throughout this time frame, aid and assistance were being provided by several countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union.

In October 1969, a bloodless military coup deposed Shermanke and shortly thereafter installed Major General Mohamed Siad Barre as head of government; the following year, Siad Barre announced that the country would pursue a policy of "scientific socialism." These words were obviously welcomed by the Soviets, who had begun increasing their aid just after the coup. (See Chapter IV for treatment of Soviet initiatives and activities.) In the same year, 1970, the United States halted all aid to Somalia in retaliation for ships flying the Somali flag delivering goods to North Vietnam. Once again, the advantage was awarded to Moscow.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOVIET INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

The basic model for Soviet involvement in the Third World consists of three parts: military aid, economic assistance, and political ties. It is in the proportional mix of these instruments and the degree of pragmatism applied that describes the Soviet approach to Third World countries. The success or failure of Soviet initiatives can be assessed by examining this model and the manner in which the Soviets integrate the parts.

During the period from 1969 to 1977, American foreign policy actions in both Ethiopia and Somalia had resulted in each country turning to the Soviet Union for aid and assistance. In light of the Soviet Union's already demonstrated interest in the developing Third World, this was an opportunity the USSR could not ignore. Granting Ethiopian and Somali requests, however, Moscow found itself involved with two countries at odds with each other and also with past Soviet practices and stated philosophy. In Ethiopia, Moscow had historically been a supporter of the Eritreans, who were fighting for their independence from Addis Ababa. Meanwhile, Somalia maintained an irredentist philosophy against both Ethiopia and Kenya, espousing the long-term goal of bringing under the Somali flag the ethnic Somali inhabitants of Ethiopia's Ogaden and Kenya's Northern Frontier District. Yet, for a period of approximately seven years, Moscow managed to walk

this political tightrope and probably would have continued even longer had the Soviets not been forced into taking sides by Somali demands and Somali intervention in the Ogaden.

Soviet actions taken in Ethiopia and Somalia in the areas of military, political, and economic assistance are detailed below. Chronicling Soviet programs in this way allows for a comparative analysis of the approach used in each country. The results of this analysis are found in Chapter V.

#### A. Ethiopia

##### 1. Military Actions

The most visible Soviet initiatives and activities in Ethiopia have been in the area of military support. Beginning in January 1974, when military and civilian mutinies and strikes became frequent, the situation in Ethiopia deteriorated rapidly. The continued erosion of order, the changes in government, and finally, the overthrow of Haile Selassie in September 1975 most certainly were closely monitored by the Soviets. Throughout 1974, 1975, and 1976, the military leaders of Ethiopia continued to press the United States for additional and more timely arms sales and deliveries. The frequency and tone of the interactions between the two governments indicated a continuing and increasing frustration on the part of Ethiopia. The military government's

request for arms from the USSR in September 1974(9) may have been an early indicator of their dissatisfaction with the diminishing support provided by the U.S., following the decision to phase out Kagnev Station. The pronouncement of a policy of socialism in December 1974, the steady elimination of democratic principles, the elimination of the civilian control structures, and the signing of various cooperation agreements between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia ultimately led to Mengistu's visiting Moscow in December 1976 to sign a \$385 million arms support agreement.(10) From this point on, the Soviet Union had gained the initiative over the United States. Events in the first half of 1977 finally resulted in the termination of the remaining U.S. arms support to Ethiopia. This termination was probably anticipated by Ethiopia prior to Mengistu's late 1976 visit to Moscow. The Soviet Union and Ethiopia signed an additional \$400 million arms agreement in September 1977.(11) That the Soviets did not react more quickly and more extensively with military support to Ethiopia may have been a function of their continuing support to Somalia up to their expulsion from that country in November 1977. By the time of the September arms agreement, it was clear to the Soviets that the likelihood of salvaging their Somali relationship was marginal at best. By the time of their expulsion from Somalia on 13 November 1977, the Soviets had firmly established their

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(9) Fred Halliday, "Soviet Policy in the Horn of Africa," Middle East International, February 1980, p. 10.

(10) Steven David, "Realignment in the Horn: The Soviet Advantage," International Security, Current News Special Edition No. 511, 10 January 1980, p. 4.

(11) Ibid., p. 5.

influence and credibility in Ethiopia. Responding to requests for assistance from Ethiopia for the conduct of the Ogaden war with Somalia in late November 1977, the Soviets conducted a massive air- and sealoift of arms and advisors which was to provide Ethiopia with more than one billion dollars in support.(12) This extensive and--more importantly--very timely and rapid support served both countries well. It pulled Ethiopia out of a precarious position in the war, cemented the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship, and gave the Soviet Union its first real opportunity to demonstrate global projection of power.

Since 1977, the Soviets have continued to provide extensive military support in the form of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery pieces, aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, naval patrol craft, and other materiel. The training of Ethiopian military personnel in the Soviet Union has further cemented the relationship. In payment for this massive military aid, which has totalled nearly four billion dollars since 1976,(13) the Soviets have apparently obtained base rights at Dahalak Island on the Red Sea for use by their Indian Ocean squadron(14) and rights to airfields for use by medium-range reconnaissance aircraft (Il-38 MAY anti-submarine warfare aircraft). Permanent mainland naval facilities have not been granted; it can be anticipated, however, that the Soviets will continue to press for more extensive and more secure access to Ethiopian naval and air facilities.

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(12)Ibid., p. 6.

(13)Crockett, p. 4.

(14)Drew Middleton, "New Soviet Anchorage Reported in Ethiopian Isles in the Red Sea," New York Times, 28 October 1982, p. A6:3-4.

## 2. Economic Actions

The USSR began economic assistance to Ethiopia in 1959, when it provided a grant for a technical school and credits for such projects as an oil refinery and a power plant. Further grants for wheat, fertilizer, medical and educational equipment, and a hospital expansion project were provided in 1974 and 1975. Overall, the intensity of the effort was low, and relatively small amounts of money were involved; during the 1959-1975 period.(15)

Consistent with political developments, economic activity intensified in 1977. Additional credits were quickly granted, and the next year, additional equipment and food grants were made.(16) Both grants and credits have been extended by the USSR to Ethiopia every year since 1978. Elsewhere, the Soviets have preferred to associate themselves with high-visibility economic projects, such as power plants and heavy industry. The Soviet thrust in Ethiopia, however, has been to develop agriculture, education, medical capabilities, power distribution, oil processing, and construction capabilities. The theme seems to be to develop a "self-help" capability while promoting light and medium industry. How projects were selected is unknown. It does appear, at least on the surface, that the Soviets coordinated their economic assistance efforts with those provided by East European communist countries. Little overlap or duplication appears, and

(15) U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid to Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1991 (U), (Washington: June 1982), p. 126. SECRET NOFORN NOCONTRACT

(16) Ibid., pp. 126-127.

the assistance seems to have been designed to complement the Soviet thrust.

Ethiopia has apparently moved ahead cautiously. It has not drawn all of the grants and credits provided by the USSR and those offered by other communist countries, including China. (Grants, as opposed to credits, are generally accepted immediately.)

### 3. Political Actions

Soviet interest in Ethiopia was demonstrated immediately following World War II, when the USSR attempted to secure a United Nations trusteeship over Eritrea, (17) then as now a part of historical Ethiopia.

Pre-empted from involvement in Ethiopia and Eritrea by American and British support of Haile Selassie, Moscow covertly supported the Eritreans in their struggle for independence in the 1960s and early 1970s. Concurrently, Moscow maintained formal but cool diplomatic relations with the Selassie government until its overthrow in 1975.

Upon taking over, the army putschists attempted--initially successfully--to maintain ties with the United States, while at the same time approaching Moscow for military aid. The Soviets, on the other hand, appeared reluctant to comply with the Ethiopian requests, perhaps because of their Somali connection.

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(17) Rothenberg, p. 138.

Soviet support for the new Ethiopian government became more active only as United States relations with Ethiopia deteriorated over human rights, the confiscation without compensation of U.S. property, and refusal by the U.S. to provide arms.

Furious at the turn in U.S.-Ethiopian relations, Ethiopia turned to a hesitant USSR for arms and political support and, after a year of negotiations, began to receive limited amounts.(18)

During the 1977-1980 period, the USSR attempted to increase its influence as a result of these arms shipments while at the same time continuing covertly to support the Eritreans.

With the Ethiopian-Somali war in the Ogaden (which reignited in 1977), the final recall of the American ambassador from Addis Ababa, and the cutting of the U.S. Embassy staff to a bare minimum in 1980, the USSR had become by default the paramount foreign power in Ethiopia. As a result, advisors from the Warsaw Pact nations arrived in large numbers; the East Germans, for example, became responsible for advising the Ethiopians on internal security matters. The Soviet Union itself changed sides and began to assist in suppressing an Eritrean insurgency which they had previously supported. Cuba then began to assist Ethiopia against Somalia--previously both a Cuban and Soviet ally.

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(18) Octaway, pp. 103-106.

### 3. Somalia

#### 1. Military Actions

From its independence in 1960, Somalia was confronted with the task of forming and training an army. It initially had problems with obtaining military aid. Somalia first turned to the West for help, but its claims on neighboring territory made Western countries fear that the Somali Army would be used to extend Somalia's borders. In addition, Western countries believed that Somalia was requesting aid far in excess of its needs for defense.(19)

During the period from 1960 to 1963, Somalia approached the United States, Great Britain, Italy, and West Germany for military aid. Initially, the United States was completely uninterested because it had close ties with Ethiopia, and Somalia offered nothing of unique interest. As a former colonial power in the region (British Somaliland had been incorporated into the new Somalia), Great Britain traditionally sympathized with the Somali vision of national reunification; the British, however, were reluctant to endanger their position in Kenya by altering the regional balance. Finally, the United States, Italy, and West Germany made a modest proposal to train a force of approximately

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(19) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

5,000 men, with a strong focus on internal security.(20)

Somalia was dissatisfied with the Western offers and had but one alternative in its search for military aid: the Soviet Union. The Soviets offered a \$32 million loan and assistance in equipping and training a 10,000-man force. The Somali decision to accept this offer opened the door for a Soviet presence in Somalia.

The army formed in the 1960s with Soviet aid was small in absolute terms, but in the context of the region, the Somali Army was well equipped. By 1970, Somalia had 12,000 men under arms, the fourth largest army in sub-Saharan Africa at the time. Defense spending was very high relative to the country's assets. Somalia's tank force of 150 Soviet-built T-34's was a rarity among the nations of sub-Saharan Africa.(21) During the period from 1963 to 1974, Soviet military aid to Somalia was estimated to be approximately \$115 million. While an in-country force of 300 Soviet military advisors helped the growing army, more than 500 Somali officers and technicians went to the Soviet Union for military and ideological training. By 1974, 60 per cent of Somali officers were Soviet-trained.(22)

In July 1974, a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Somalia and the USSR was signed during Soviet President

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(20) Nimrod Novik, On the Shores of Bab al-Mandab: Soviet Diplomacy and Regional Dynamics, Foreign Policy Research Institute Monograph No. 26 (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1979), p. 24.

(21) Ottaway, p. 39.

(22) Novik, p. 25.

Podgorny's visit to Mogadishu. With this alliance, Somalia became the most important Soviet client in sub-Saharan Africa. In return, the Soviets acquired some important military benefits in Somalia. Their primary interest was in the deep water port of Berbera, which would take ships of up to 12,000 tons. Access to Berbera port facilities provided the Soviets with an ability to reprovise and maintain their ships and submarines at a port at the northwestern end of the Indian Ocean. The Soviets had gained an operational overseas infrastructure for naval deployment in the Indian Ocean area.

In 1975, the Soviets gained exclusive use of a section of the harbor at Berbera, where they placed their own harbormaster. Extensive communications were established to serve operations in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. The Soviets built oil storage tanks, housing for 15,000 personnel, and warehouses. In addition, they constructed a 12,000-foot runway at Berbera which would take Tu-95 BEAR-D reconnaissance aircraft. The Soviets had full access to all Somali airfields, including Berbera and Uanle Uen and improved military airfields at Hargesia and Galcaio.(23)

In April 1976, British sources reported the presence of approximately 650 Cuban troops in Somalia, some 2,500 Soviet advisors, and a large stock of naval and air force supplies.

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(23) Brian Crozier, The Soviet Presence in Somalia, Conflict Studies No. 54 (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1975), pp. 9-11.

Among the Cubans were pilots and technicians.(24)

During the period from 1973 to 1976, the Soviets increased the number of men in the Somali Air Force eightfold, from 350 to 2,700. The Army increased from 17,000 to 20,000, while the Navy kept the same level of a 300-man force. Comparisons of equipment were as follows:(25)

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>
Army	150 T-34 medium tanks	250 medium tanks (Including addition of more modern T-54's)
Air Force	21 combat aircraft	52 combat aircraft
Navy	4 P-6 motor torpedo boats 6 P-4 motor torpedo boats	4 P-6's 6 P-4's 2 submarine chasers

The additional Soviet-made MiG aircraft made the Somali Air Force the largest in that area of the continent. In addition, an SA-2 surface-to-air missile complex was constructed in the Mogadishu area. Training of Somali military personnel in the USSR continued at a rapid pace.

In July 1977, the Somalis appear to have concluded that without prompt action, their military superiority in the region would be reversed due both to declining Soviet supplies and to the rapid build-up of Soviet arms and advisors and Cuban troops

(24)Novik, p. 26.

(25)The Military Balance, 1973-74 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1974), p. 46; The Military Balance, 1977-78 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978), pp. 46-47.

in Ethiopia. Somalia began its preparations for the Ogaden campaign and ordered a gradual withdrawal of Soviet advisors. Soon after the Somali invasion of the Ogaden began, the USSR halted spare parts deliveries to Somalia.(26)

On 13 November 1977, Somalia broke its relations with Moscow. Soviet advisors were ordered to leave the country within seven days. Concurrently, the Soviet use of strategic naval and air facilities at Somali bases on the Indian Ocean ended. The Cubans were also ordered out of Somalia. Somali abrogation of the 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation ended Soviet military and political ties with Somalia.(27)

## 2. Economic Actions

Soviet economic participation in Somalia primarily took the form of loans and the development of food-processing plants. During the 1970s, approximately \$100 million of a \$150 million line of credit was used by the Somalis.(28) It is estimated that \$80 million of the \$100 million was used in the resettlement of nomads on farms. A dairy and meat and fish canneries were also built. The dairy still operates intermittently, the canneries function, and the relocation project has been marginally successful. The North Koreans started a cement plant that was only

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(26) Novik, p. 35.

(27) Ibid., p. 40.

(28) Ottaway, p. 70.

recently completed by the French.(29)

### 3. Political Actions

Soviet political activities and initiatives in Somalia followed rather than preceded military and economic measures. A devout Muslim and a strong nationalist, Mohamed Siad Barre most likely accepted Soviet influence in Somali political life perhaps out of desperation and fear. (Siad Barre's 1970 speech which labelled his revolution as one promoting "scientific socialism" was probably no more than the echoing of a term then fashionable in Africa in an effort to put out a "Welcome" mat for Soviet aid and, incidentally, poke a finger in the eye of the West.)

Stung by Western refusal to support his irredentist policies, Siad Barre turned to the USSR for help; he was undoubtedly shaken by an unsuccessful plot against him in May 1971, and stepped up his efforts to obtain Soviet aid and succor.

The USSR responded by dispatching Defense Minister Andrei Grechko to Mogadishu in February 1972; Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) Chairman Yuriy Andropov followed on a quieter visit later in the year.(30) Andropov's visit marked a high point in the close relationship between the KGB and the nascent Somali National Security Service (NSS). Organized under Soviet tutelage with resident Soviet advisors, the NSS was a key element of Siad Barre's internal security apparatus.

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(29)Kevin Connor, Somali Desk Officer, U.S. Bureau of Mines, Washington, D.C.: Telephone Conversation, 20 October 1982.

(30)Crozier, p. 5.

Siad Barre also called upon his newly-found Soviet friends to establish a people's militia known as the Gulwadayasha ("Victory Pioneers"), "an elite group of young volunteers [whose task was to] discourage and report on political dissidents, drum up support for government programmes, and in general keep the ordinary citizens in line."(31)

The value of this Soviet assistance led Siad Barre, in July 1972, to deliver a major address in which he rejected "African socialism" in favor of Marxism-Leninism. Significantly, however, Siad Barre was careful to note that his brand of Marxism retained obedience to Islam.

In 1974, Somalia entered the Arab League under the sponsorship of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps sensing that Somalia was in danger of slipping back from Lenin to Mohammed, the USSR immediately undertook a major campaign to bring Siad Barre back into the fold. Delegations were dispatched to Mogadishu from Soviet "friendship" organizations, the Italian Communist Party, the German Democratic Republic, and Cuba to lobby for the Soviet cause.(32)

Siad Barre stalled through June 1974, allowing himself the privilege of hosting the annual Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit meeting in June. In accordance with OAU custom, Siad Barre thus became president of the OAU for the following year.

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(31) Ibid., pp. 5-6.

(32) Ibid., p. 4.

Amidst great fanfare on 8 July 1974, Soviet President Nikolay Podgorny arrived in Mogadishu at the head of a major Soviet delegation, and Somalia and the USSR signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on 11 July.

Although Siad Barre decreed in August 1974 that all invitations received by Somali officials from foreigners were to be submitted to the Presidency for approval, Crozier claims that this decree did not appear to restrict in any way Somali contacts with Soviet officials and advisors in the country.(33)

The Ethiopian military coup in September 1974 marked the beginning of the end for Soviet-Somali relations. The Soviet Union switched gradually to the side of Ethiopia, and the Castro-sponsored federation meeting among Ethiopia, Somalia, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, which was held in Aden in March 1977, was a disaster. Although Siad Barre bravely claimed in August 1977, on the eve of what was to be his last visit to Moscow, that Somalia had no problems with the USSR, the August visit showed that Soviet-Somali differences were irreconcilable.(34) Finally, on 13 November 1977, Siad Barre unilaterally repudiated the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, and the break was definitive.

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(33) Ibid., p. 7.

(34) Ottawa, p. 116.

### C. The Cuban Role

A discussion of foreign activities in the Horn of Africa would be incomplete without addressing the role Cuba has played in influencing the events that have taken place in Africa since the mid-1970s. Cuba's impact in African affairs has grown significantly during the past two decades; actual Cuban influence on events, however, has nowhere been greater than in Angola and in Ethiopia. It is in these two countries, on opposite sides of the African continent, that the world has observed what may be only a prelude to future Cuban involvement.

Angola presented an excellent opportunity for Cuba to exert its influence in support of a national liberation movement. The commitment of large numbers of regular combat troops, supported by Soviet military equipment, assured the success of the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in that country. The inability of the West to counter the Soviet-Cuban adventure (a result of the post-Vietnam syndrome) contributed to its success and may well have led to the similar Soviet-Cuban initiative in Ethiopia. As in Angola, the West has been unable to counter the Soviet and Cuban activities in Ethiopia. There is, however, an important difference in the way the Cuban presence is being used in the two countries. In Angola, Cuban combat troops remain, but they have an added and more extensive involvement in the day-to-day operations of the country. This involvement is so basic that some analysts believe that a withdrawal of Cubans from

Angola would have a disastrous effect on the country's political and economic structure were they not replaced by other outsiders. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, although some 12,000 combat troops remain, Cuban personnel are not actively integrated into the infrastructure of the country. The Cubans represent a presence in Ethiopia, and since the conclusion of the full-scale war in the Ogaden, they have not been directly involved in major combat operations.

Nevertheless, the very presence of 12,000 combat troops in Ethiopia cannot help but have an influence on the Ethiopian government. On the one hand, this presence represents an instrument of security for the government against either Somali advances or internal threats; on the other hand, it represents a potential force for use to unseat the present government should Moscow and Havana decide to replace Mengistu. It is a fully equipped force which is poised for potential use in a multitude of ways.

Even more disconcerting is the fact that these 12,000 Cuban combat troops garrisoned in the Horn but not actively engaged in combat represent a potent force which could be deployed elsewhere in Africa, to the Middle East, or to Southwest Asia. Cuba's demonstrated interests in Africa and its willingness to commit forces in support of national liberation movements, coupled with the Soviet Union's similar goals and a Soviet willingness to underwrite Cuban activities, lead to a distinct potential for

future direct involvement in Africa (e.g., Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique), the Middle East (e.g., Syria), and Southwest Asia (e.g., South Yemen).

It would appear that the successful operations in Angola and Ethiopia have resulted in the Soviets' obtaining a strategic reserve (or "Rapid Deployment Force" equivalent) in the form of the Cubans in Africa. This, however, is not to suggest that Cuba is acting solely as the Soviet Union's proxy in Africa. The Cubans have their own goals on the continent and elsewhere in the Third World; a commonality of interests between Cuba and the USSR in the cases of Angola and Ethiopia has resulted in a partnership beneficial to both. Nevertheless, the success of these operations and the degree of Cuban dependence on the Soviet Union could result in future Soviet moves in Africa involving the Cuban troops.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE SOVIET APPROACH

#### A. General

Chapter IV provided a detailed description of Soviet initiatives and activities undertaken before 1978, when the USSR had significant influence in Somalia, and since 1977, as the Soviets further develop their relationship with Ethiopia. Figure 1 provides a synopsis of observations with respect to the political, military, and economic elements of a model for both Somalia and Ethiopia. Since the Soviets were dealing with countries in the same general area and only a few years apart in time, it is not surprising that many of the elements of this model are very similar. In fact, it can be seen that for the most part, the Soviet approach to both countries has been nearly identical. Figure 1, however, does identify several differences that may reflect a Soviet recognition of the need to refine certain aspects of their relationship in order to increase the probability of success within the country.

#### B. Political

Perhaps the most consistent portion of the Soviet model used for both Somalia and Ethiopia lies in the political interactions. As can be seen in Figure 1, the approach for both countries was remarkably similar. In both instances, the Soviets were invited

FIGURE 1: SYNOPSIS OF SOVIET INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

	SOMALIA	ETHIOPIA
POLITICAL	<p>ACTIVE SUPPORT INVITED SUPPORT REFUSED BY UNITED STATES</p> <p>EXCHANGE OF HIGH LEVEL VISITORS COOPERATION WITH INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS USSR ENCOURAGED CIVILIAN-BASED COMMUNIST PARTY SIGNED FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY</p> <p>SUPPORTED ONE-MAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIP ESPoused SOCIALISM AND THEN MARXISM-LENINISM PRO ARAB, MUSLIM, PRO PALESTINIAN</p>	<p>ACTIVE SUPPORT INVITED SUPPORT BY UNITED STATES VIEWED AS NOT ENOUGH AND UNTIMELY; SUPPORT ULTIMATELY TERMINATED</p> <p>EXCHANGE OF HIGH LEVEL VISITORS COOPERATION WITH INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS USSR ENCOURAGED CIVILIAN-BASED COMMUNIST PARTY SIGNED FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY (ALONG WITH OTHER POLITICAL TREATIES)</p> <p>SUPPORTED ONE-MAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIP ESPoused SOCIALISM AND THEN MARXISM-LENINISM</p> <p>SOVIETS VIEW ETHIOPIA AS INVOLVED IN TRUE REVOLUTION</p> <p>CHRISTIAN WITH TIES TO ISRAEL; FIGHTING ERITREANS</p>
MILITARY	<p>SIGNIFICANT ARMS TRANSFERS VISITS BY SENIOR MILITARY PERSONNEL (E.G. GRECHKO) PURSUED AND GAINED BASE RIGHTS TRAINED MILITARY PERSONNEL IN USSR</p> <p>SOVIET/CUBAN ADVISORS IN-COUNTRY (2500/650) MILITARY AID 1953-1974: APPROX. \$153 MILLION</p> <p>VALUE OF FACILITIES (STRATEGIC AND PHYSICAL) HIGHER</p>	<p>SIGNIFICANT ARMS TRANSFERS VISITS BY SENIOR MILITARY PERSONNEL (E.G. CORSHIKOV) PURSUED AND GAINED BASE RIGHTS TRAINED MILITARY PERSONNEL IN USSR</p> <p>SOVIET/CUBAN ADVISORS IN-COUNTRY (1200/17000) MILITARY AID 1976-1981: APPROX. \$4 BILLION MASSIVE AIR AND SEALIFT OF MATERIAL/ADVISORS IN 1977 TO SUPPORT ETHIOPIA IN WAR WITH SOMALIA SOVIET GENERAL (PETROV) DIRECTING MILITARY OPS</p>
ECONOMIC	<p>MINIMUM ECONOMIC COMMITMENT SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES ALLOWED INCREASED LINE OF CREDIT</p> <p>RUDIMENTARY ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTED IN DEVELOPING FOOD PROCESSING FACILITIES</p>	<p>MINIMUM ECONOMIC COMMITMENT SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES ALLOWED INCREASED LINE OF CREDIT</p> <p>ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN EXISTENCE ASSISTED IN SELF HELP, POWER AND OIL. PROC. IND. HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED OIL IMPORTS</p>

into a country which had been refused military support (or which had perceived a lack of support) by the United States. Exchanges of visits by high-level officials led to the signing of various treaties and agreements which culminated in a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. In both instances, the African country concerned announced adherence to a policy of socialism, followed by the espousal of Marxist-Leninist principles. Finally, in both instances, the Soviet Union actively urged the establishment of a mass-based communist party. Perhaps the major difference in the Soviet approaches to Somalia and Ethiopia was the Soviet assessment of the situation in Ethiopia as a true revolution in the Marxist-Leninist sense.

### C. Military

As with their political interactions, the military portion of the Soviet model is remarkably similar for both Somalia and Ethiopia. Following the expulsion of the Soviets from Somalia and Moscow's determination that the situation in Ethiopia represented a "true revolution," the Soviets made a greater and more binding commitment to Ethiopia. In both countries, the Soviets agreed to provide significant military aid which was unavailable from other sources. Visits by high-ranking military personnel presaged agreements which would provide for further arms deliveries, military advisors, future training of military personnel, and base rights for Soviet naval and air assets. Nevertheless, there are several areas in the military portions of the Somalia and

Ethiopia models which warrant comment. First, the Soviets have provided enormously more military aid to Ethiopia than they ever did to Somalia. In fact, the initial agreement between Ethiopia and the USSR was for \$385 million, while the entire support for Somalia between 1953 and 1974 was approximately \$153 million. The magnitude of the military aid provided illustrates the importance the Soviets attach to Ethiopia. Secondly, the massive Soviet airlift of military materiel and advisors in support of Ethiopia's war with Somalia also is unmatched by any prior Soviet support for Somalia. This effort, representing some \$1.1 billion in aid, also underscores Moscow's dedication to support a "true revolution" and maintain a foothold in the Horn of Africa. Finally, the use of Cuban troops and General Vasily I. Petrov (Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Ground Forces) to ensure Ethiopia's success in her war with Somalia in the Ogaden represents a significant departure from anything seen during the Soviet support of Somalia.

#### D. Economic

Perhaps the least visible aspect of the Soviet model in both countries was and remains the economic portion. In both Somalia and Ethiopia, the economic support can be characterized as minimal in the context of the overall relationship with each country. Although it is afforded importance by the Soviets, economic support to Ethiopia has been insufficient to date; in fact, Ethiopia has turned to other sources, including the West, for economic

aid. It is true that the economic infrastructures of Somalia and Ethiopia were greatly different. The minimal support provided to each, however, is a reflection of a significant Soviet weakness in this area. Even with Soviet assistance in the "self-help" area (agriculture, construction, medicine, power distribution, oil), economic prospects for Ethiopia remain bleak for the near term.

CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V demonstrates that the Soviet approaches in Ethiopia and Somalia were nearly identical. Given similar conditions and opportunities in other Third World areas, it is reasonable to conclude that the Soviet Union may pursue the same basic plan.

In Third World countries tied to the West, the Soviets will most likely maintain a presence but will proceed cautiously, providing discreet assistance to "progressive" forces. Should the Western ties of such a country weaken significantly, the Soviets can be expected to look favorably on any requests for assistance. Once Moscow decides to support a regime, the response will most likely be a demonstration of willingness and ability to furnish arms and other military equipment rapidly. Given the benefits which have accrued to the Soviet position from the presence of Cuban combat forces in Ethiopia, we might expect to see them inserted as part of Soviet forays into other countries. We might even conclude that whereas the Cubans now in Ethiopia are in a "strategic reserve" status, Moscow might--in order to improve further the timeliness of Soviet military support--encourage their deployment elsewhere.

Once the Soviets initially have demonstrated their responsiveness through the rapidity of their military assistance, they will then draw upon all of their other instruments of influence

in order to push the host regime into associating with them through a whole range of social, political, economic and military means. We can depend on them to use:

--overt political actions in the form of reciprocal high-level visits and friendship treaties;

--additional and continued military aid in the form of equipment, advisors, and possible Cuban combat forces;

--economic aid--by far the smallest and least effective tool;

--intelligence and security operations, including close association with the target country's security services.

Acting in this way, Moscow most likely will be seeking to ingratiate itself to its host in order to achieve the ultimate Soviet goal--the formation of a mass-based communist ruling party with strong ties to the Soviet Union.

In working toward that goal, however, the Soviets can be expected to display a high degree of pragmatism and patience. Initially, they can be relied upon to bend to the host country's desires, apparently sacrificing consistency. For example, although the USSR avows a policy of supporting revolutionary movements, the Soviets forsook the Eritreans, whose bid for independence they had backed when Eritrea seemed to offer the opportunity to gain a foothold in Ethiopia. The Soviet penchant

for pragmatism and flexibility was also demonstrated by their simultaneous albeit brief support of both Ethiopia and Somalia before they finally chose Ethiopia as offering a greater potential gain.

In summary, Moscow's moves in Third World countries seem limited so long as the countries concerned maintain strong ties with the West. The Soviets seem content to bide their time until a weakening of these ties allows them an entree to play their military assistance card.

CHAPTER VII  
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Soviet Union's recent and successful inroads into the Horn of Africa (first Somalia and now Ethiopia) represent a failure of United States foreign policy in this region. The strategic value of this region has increased since the end of World War II. Yet, U.S. policies did not reflect this value, and in little more than a decade, the United States lost its position of primary influence in the Horn, while the Soviet Union gained important and highly strategic footholds. The lessons learned from Soviet successes and United States failures could profoundly influence future policies toward other Third World countries. Paramount in these lessons are the setbacks suffered by the Soviets, areas of Soviet inadequacy, and--finally--Soviet operating procedures which might be exploited. It is these factors which have been addressed in this paper. Based on this examination, several recommendations are set forth below which could--if successfully implemented in whole or in part--help weaken Soviet influence in other Third World regions of significant interest to the United States. At the least, they stand to raise the economic and political costs to the Soviets while allowing the United States access to countries which have turned to the USSR.

In those Third World countries located in areas which the United States deems to be strategically significant, we recommend:

--that the United States not attempt to compete with the USSR in being the sole supplier of military combat equipment. We are unable, because of legislative and bureaucratic limitations, to provide such equipment in the quantity, quality, and speed of delivery desired.

--that the United States clearly recognize that its major advantage over the Soviet Union lies in the economic arena. It should therefore capitalize on that advantage in developing and supporting its long-term relationships with Third World countries.

--that the United States, with minimal exceptions, attach to its aid political strings, such as supportive votes in the United Nations, limitations on Soviet basing or overflight rights, or limitations on the size of the Soviet, East European, or Cuban presence in the country concerned.

--that the United States secure support and cooperation in providing coordinated aid and assistance to Third World countries from former colonial powers, NATO allies, the European Community, Japan, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and others.

--that regardless of the nature of our relations with Third World countries, the Department of State continue contact with both the host governments and significant opposition movements within these countries and--through other channels--with opposition forces outside the countries. Formal diplomatic relations and official United States presence should be maintained as long as possible.

--that the United States, in coordination with other friendly nations if possible, use aid, propaganda, and diplomatic contacts to provide Third World countries with the ability to play the American/Western card to afford them maximum leverage in their relations with the Soviet Union.

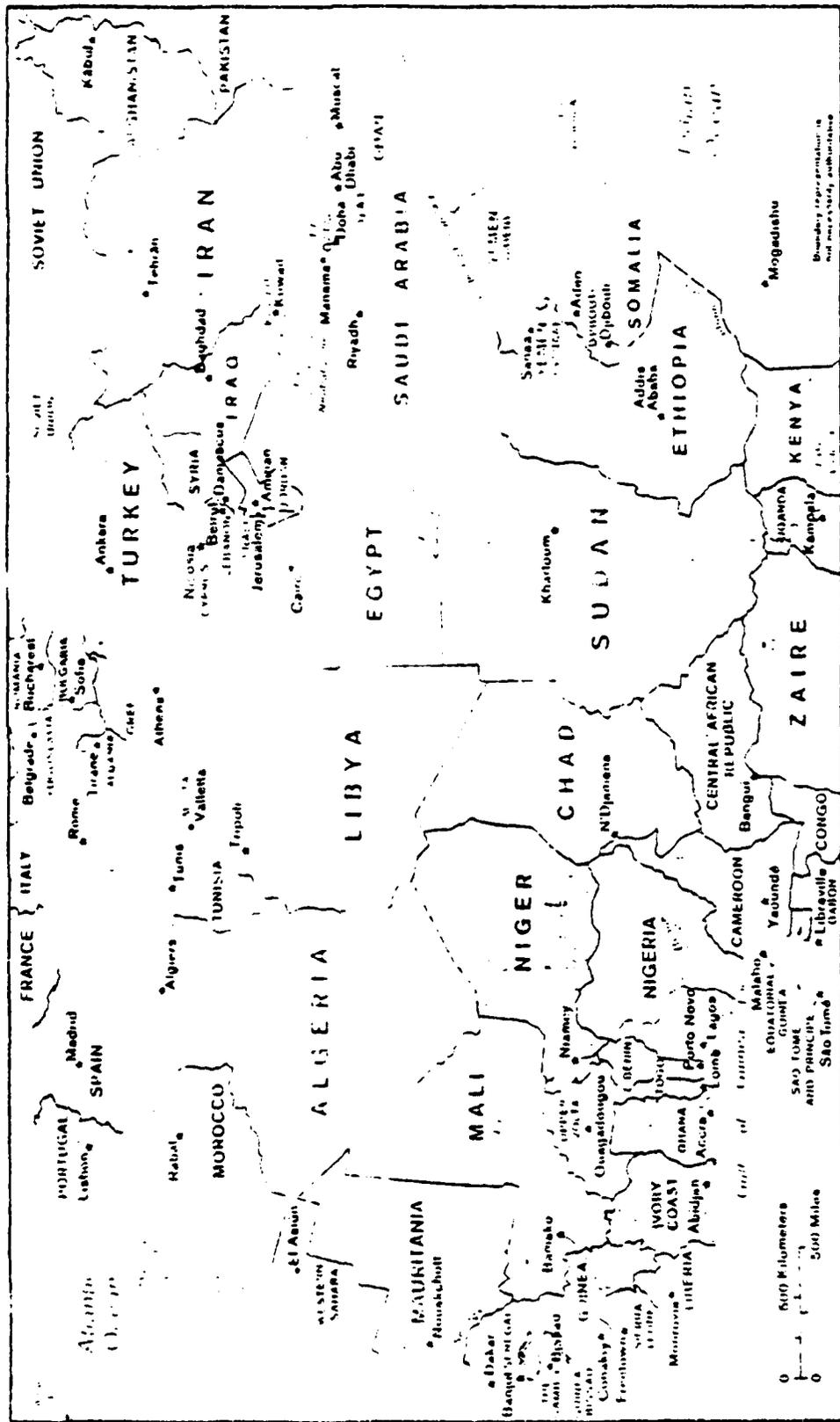
--that the United States Information Agency improve the quality and scope of its Leader Grant and Exchange Visitor programs. Particular consideration should be given to Third World leaders or potential leaders who have studied in or visited the USSR.

--that United States information activities in the Third World be increased and focused primarily on countering Soviet influence.

--that the United States step up efforts to acquire a major stockpile of replacement parts for and expertise in Soviet military equipment. Such a stockpile would make the United States

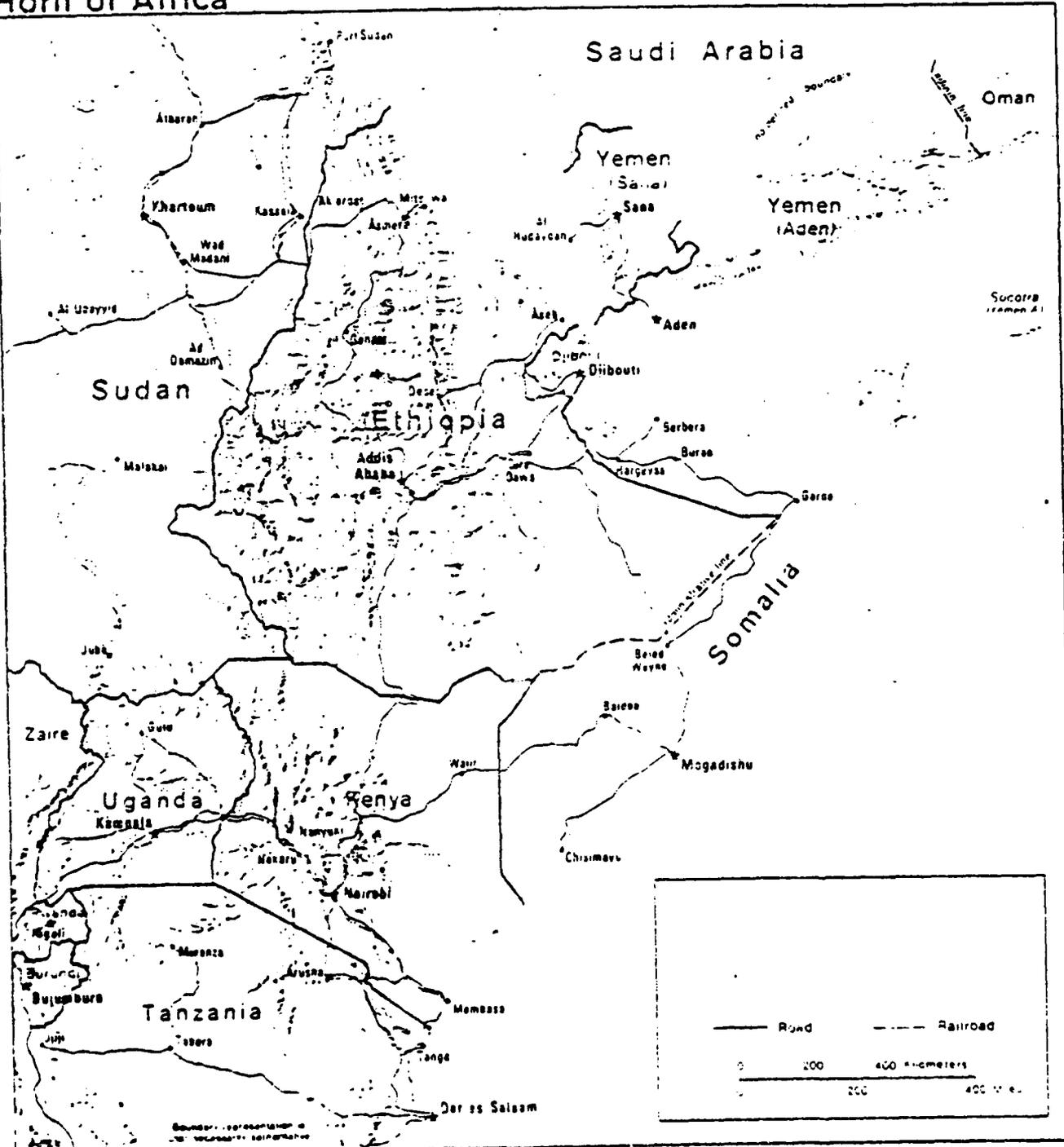
a credible and available alternative to Third World nations  
previously tied to the USSR for military aid.

Northern Africa and the Middle East



APPENDIX B

Horn of Africa



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