

**ETHIOPIA AND THE SUPERPOWERS
(1974-1978)**

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present work is an attempt to examine the relations between Ethiopia and Super Powers from 1974 to 1978. The study is based on chronological events with a discussion of the historical perspective of Ethiopia to unravel the colonisation of Ethiopia by the colonial powers like Britain, Italy and France who were mainly responsible for the creation of the problems of Eritrean secessionism, Greater Somalia, Ogaden dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia, and the problem of sea outlet for Ethiopia.

These problems assume unusual importance because Ethiopia is geographically situated in a strategic place of the world on the coast of Red Sea through which oil passes from Arab world to the western world.

So, the present work is to underline the change of attitude of the two super powers to Eritrean secession problem and dispute over the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia. In ~~taking~~ this endeavour, we have analysed the problems historically, taking into consideration various point of views. Utmost care has been taken to maintain academic objectivity in evaluating and analysing the issues.

The study is based, mainly, on secondary sources because very little materials from primary sources are available. Secondary sources include clippings both of Indian and foreign newspapers and journals.

The first chapter gives a historical perspective of the problems that Ethiopia is facing in order to give a correct perspective of Ethiopia's relations with super powers.

The second chapter deals with the role of super powers in Ethiopia during 1950-1973 period to give the background of the role of super powers in Ethiopia.

The third chapter deals with the change of attitude of super powers towards Eritreans especially after 1974 Ethiopian Revolution.

The fourth chapter deals with the attitude of super powers towards the Ogaden region leading to a war in 1977.

The fifth chapter deals with some major conclusions.

It is only befitting that I should express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Vijay Gupta, Associate Professor, Centre for West Asian and African Studies, for the valuable guidance and encouragement that enabled me complete the work. I am also grateful to Mr. M.B. Rao, for his valuable advice. And finally, I would like to thank Mrs. Anali for typing out the manuscripts and the final work in the short span of time and also to Mr. Mathew for his help and cooperation in completing this work.

Any shortcomings which may have been there inspite of my best efforts are entirely mine.

(PRADIP KUMAR MISHRA)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, we are dealing with the problems originating with the interaction and relationship between super powers and Ethiopia. In order to understand the interaction and relationship we have to go into the history of the entire Horn. The problems of the Horn have their basis in the European colonial expansion and rivalry, in the European and United States interests in the Red Sea. In practical terms the major dispute is: whether Eritrea and Ogaden are parts of Ethiopia or Ogaden is part of Somalia and Eritrea, an independent entity. We will go into the historical events which led to the development of Ethiopia as a nation composed of various ethnic groups, with their own rulers and territories. This also happens to be the period when European powers started encroaching into the Horn as a part of their worldwide drive to extend their colonial boundaries into Asia and Africa.

We intend to examine all available historical records regarding the claims of various contenders on territories.

The search for historical truth will also reveal the causes of the present-day conflicts, which are mainly concentrated on the following issues: Ogaden; Eritrea; passage to sea, i.e. Ethiopia's rights over Massawa and Asseb, and the coastline of the Red Sea including the Dahlak islands.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The horn of Africa consists of Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Ethiopia lies between 3° and 10° N latitude and between 33° and 48° E longitude. With Sudan on its west, Kenya in the south, Djibouti and Somalia in the east and north-east, it has a 1,000 km long Red Sea coastline.

Geographically, it touches West Asia and the Indian Ocean, flanks the oil-rich states of Arabia, controls the Bab el Mandeb straits, dominates a part of the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. Thus Ethiopia is strategically important. "All Suez Canal traffic to and from Indian Ocean must pass the narrow strait of Bab el Mandeb between Djibouti and two Yemens. Super tanker traffic heading for African southern tip rides off Somali coast. Whoever controls this area controls the oil flow to Western world."¹

The following factors have presently drawn international attention to the horn: socio-political changes in Ethiopia since 1974, Somalian claims to Ethiopian territories, secessionist movement by Eritreans, opening to the sea for Ethiopia leading to dependence on the railway line passing through Djibouti, importance of Red Sea as an international sea-route between Asia and Europe.

1. Cf. Peter Schwab, "Cold War on Horn of Africa", African Affairs, vol. 77, no. 306, January 1978, pp. 7-8. (Quoted from Ray Vicker, "North Yemen Becomes One of the Pivotal Nations in the East-West Tilt", The Wall Street Journal (New York), June 1977.

In order to understand the above factors it is necessary to discuss the historical background of Ethiopia and the genesis of the problems facing that country.

Historical Background

Historically, the Horn and Ethiopia came into prominence when the Yemeni Semites invaded the area before the Christian era.² They founded the Kingdom of Axum and extended their rule up to Sudan and the present-day Kenya. The region was astride the sea and land routes linking Eastern Mediterranean, West Asia and Eastern Africa with the thriving markets of India and the East. This shows the geographical, commercial and strategic importance of Ethiopia. By A.D. 50, Axum flourished as the seat of today's Ethiopia. Around A.D. 400, the King Ezana of Axum (Ethiopia) accepted Christianity as one of the state religions.

After the Islamic Kingdom was established in the seventh century A.D., in the Arab peninsula, intrusions into the Horn and Ethiopia came from across the Red Sea and from the north by the Egyptians. From the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, Muslims from the Arabian peninsula and Christians from the Ethiopian Kingdom battled for control of the whole of the Horn area and the Ethiopia for its commercial and strategic importance.

In the early sixteenth century, Ethiopia consisted of different domains governed by local chieftains (rases) or

2. Endre, Sik, The History of Black Africa (Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, 1970), vol. 1, p. 163.

rulers who were nominally dependent on the negus or central authority.³ This was loose combination and in most cases the rases refused to obey the negus.

This type of loose authority at the centre led to internecine struggle among the local lords and between them and the negus. Besides, the Ethiopians were constantly at war with the rulers of the Arabian peninsula from the 14th century to the mid-15th century. This war became more furious in the 16th century, when the Moslem Sheikdoms in alliance with a strong Ottoman Empire planned to colonize "Christian" Ethiopia with "Moslem" Somalis. Simultaneously the numerically superior pagan Hamitic tribes of Ethiopia and the adjacent regions rose in revolt and the Galla tribes of Ethiopia had to fight on several fronts simultaneously. The Ethiopian rulers were forced to seek a strong ally and had to admit the Portuguese into the country as they offered help against the Muslim invasions.

(a) Portuguese Intrusion

The Portuguese came to Ethiopia at the end of the 15th century and persuaded its rulers to send a special mission to Portugal for a military alliance against the Muslims. The Ethiopian mission which left in 1507 reached Portugal in 1513 and in 1520 a Portuguese mission came to Ethiopia. An alliance

3. In Ethiopia the central authority was called 'negus' and the regional or local rulers were called 'rases'.

was concluded and after staying for five years in Ethiopia the Portuguese emissary returned to bring aid from Portugal to fulfil the agreement. The main aim of the Portuguese mission and the conclusion of treaty between Ethiopia and Portugal was to protect Ethiopia and Portuguese from foreign attacks. From 1526 onwards Ethiopia became a target of attacks by the alliance of Galla tribes and Moslem tribes (chiefly the Somalis) which was led by Ahmed-bin-Ibrahim (Granye) and which was backed by Egypt and Turkey. In spite of heroic efforts by the Ethiopian Negus (David III, 1508-40), he suffered continuous defeat at the hands of this alliance.

David's son Gaudius succeeded in defeating Granye in 1542. But the war did not stop; it continued into the reign of the succeeding neguses, Menas (1559-63) and Seretse-Dengel (1563-95).

Portuguese Jesuit priests who had been coming to Ethiopia since 1554 greatly influenced the Negus or Central rulers of Ethiopia. One of these Portuguese priests named Paez converted Negus Sissinius (1607-32) into the Roman faith. Vasilid (1632-65), his son, could not tolerate this Portuguese influence and ultimately compelled his father to restore the orthodox religion and to abdicate the crown. Vasilid expelled the Portuguese. The Galla rebellion was sternly put down in 1683-84 and they suffered heavy losses. After that the nomadic Galla people started settling down in Ethiopia

4. Richard Gray, ed., The Cambridge History of Africa (Cambridge University Press, 1975), vol.4, p. 537.

5. Ibid., p. 545.

6. Ibid., p. 548.

from the 17th century and towards the end of the century they started adopting the agrarian methods of the Amhara people and were absorbed in the Ethiopian feudal system.

(b) Coming of the French

After the expulsion of the Portuguese the next serious effort to enter Ethiopia was made by the French at the end of the 17th century when a French physician named Poncet came from Cairo in 1699 to cure Negus Yasu I. After some years another French man named Du Roul was sent to Ethiopia on a diplomatic mission but he was killed in Sennar by some unknown person.

In the mid-18th century an attempt by French monks to enter Ethiopia was foiled by Negus Yasu II. In 1843, a French emissary Rochet d'Hericourt, who came on a semi-official mission negotiated an agreement with Ethiopia promising French military assistance against Muslims invaders from Somali region and foreigners and protection of the privileges of French merchants in Suva.⁷

(c) British Entry

In 1769 a Scotsman James Bruce was sent to Ethiopia by the British government. His book "Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile" was the first to give the Europe a clear and proper picture of Ethiopia, her peoples and her history.⁸

7. John Flint, ed., The Cambridge History of Africa, vol.5, pp. 68-69. But the French government denied the validity of Rochet's agreement with Ethiopia.

8. See Harry A. Gailey, History of Africa from 1800 to Present (New York, 1972), p. 103.

In preparation of an invasion of Ethiopia, explorers and emissaries of European states mainly from Britain (Salt in 1805 and 1809), Germany (Ruppel in 1833, Krapf in 1834-42), France (Rochetd, Mericourt, Hobat etc.) and Italy (Italian mission to Shoa in 1846) started entering Ethiopia for a foothold for their respective countries. They entered Ethiopia on the plea of exploring the country.⁹

Treaty with Great Britain

In the 1840s Britain and France opened their consulates at Massawa and negotiated their first treaties with the Ethiopian rulers.¹⁰ The visit of Captain W.C. Harris leading an official British mission to Saale Selassie resulted in a treaty of friendship and commerce between Shoa and Great Britain on 16 November 1841. For Saale Selassie the treaty was significant for acquiring ammunition against the enemies and the British were aiming at opening up new markets for Indian trade and for obstructing the entry of French into Ethiopia.

In 1849 a second treaty was concluded between Ali and Walter Plowden, the British consul to the Emperor of Abyssinia.¹¹ Britain pledged "to secure the avenues of approach betwixt the sea coast and Abyssinia".¹² The treaty

9. See n. 2, p. 271.

10. Ibid.

11. See n. 8, p. 105.

12. See E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Eritrea on the Eve (Walthamstow Press Ltd., 1952), p. 24.

recognized Ethiopian independence and admitted that the commercial relations with the country should be free from foreign interference in domestic affairs.

In 1855 British Consul Plowden assured Theodore, Emperor of Ethiopia, that the port of Massawa and the Red Sea would be restored to Ethiopia. But later on this assurance was not kept because of the advance of Russia towards Turkey. At that time Britain was in desperate need of Egyptian and Turkish cotton for the Lancashire mills not only because of its high quality, but because of anticipated stoppage of supply of American cotton. The Sultan of Turkey was persuaded by Britain to transfer the port of Massawa to Egypt for securing promotion of trade in the Red Sea area favourable to Britain.

Theodore realised that due to the weakness of the feudal lords Ethiopia would entail the weakening of economy of the country and thereby prevent it from facing the foreign intrusion properly. ¹³ In 1856 he proclaimed himself the Negus of all Ethiopia. He wanted modern equipment of war and European instructors and therefore was interested in a commercial treaty with Britain.

The European powers became active in the second half of the sixties, when the construction of the Suez canal was nearing completion and, as a result, the hinterland of the Red Sea Coast became significant for them.

13. See n. 2, p. 271.

(d) French Base

The French had established themselves in Obock in 1862 to use it as a coaling station for their ships en route to their own possession in Indo-China, and in 1865 the Khedive, the ruler of Egypt, negotiated the cession of Massawa to Egypt. From these bases the French and Egyptian consular agents were trying to get a foothold in Ethiopia.

Theodore tried to unite all the tribes and create a strong central government with himself as the chief of chiefs. So far the centre of power had shifted with the strongest chief, the new scheme could mean preponderance of Theodore's people. The rulers of Shoa, Tigre and Amhara deserted Theodore and he was in a tight corner. At the instigation of the European powers who were unhappy at the growing strength of Theodore these rulers rebelled against him. In 1868 the British sent an expeditionary force under Sir Robert Napier. He defeated Theodore in the battle of Arogu with the help of the ruler of Tigre. Theodore committed suicide. Napier then stormed Magdala and released the chiefs from prison. This showed that Ethiopia had already become a cockpit of rivalry of European powers in Africa and also the lack of unity among the local rulers of Shoa, Tigre, Amhara and Ethiopia.

Beginning of Italian Intrigues

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 the Italian Rubattino Steamship Company acquired some possessions on the Red Sea littoral in the environs of the bay of Assab

and in Eritrea in an attempt to increase Italy's share of the Red Sea trade. The opening of the Suez canal increased the significance of French base at Obock and the British station at Aden. Within Ethiopia the struggle for the throne among the feudal chieftains of Ethiopia ended in the victory of the ruler of Tigre province Kasai against Menelike, the chief of Shoa. In January 1872, the ruler of Tigre became the negus of all Ethiopia under the name of Johannes IV (1872-1889) or ¹⁴ John II.

Johannes IV had become emperor with the British support, but Italy, unhappy with the developments, instigated Menelek of Shoa to fight against Johannes. Meanwhile in exchange for British support Johannes granted Britain concessions for plantations of cotton, indigo and coffee. Britain was not satisfied with the concessions and instead, concentrated her efforts on upsetting not only the calculations of France and Italy to control Ethiopia but also the plans of Johannes for obtaining a sea outlet for Ethiopia. She schemed to occupy Ethiopia and with this aim made use of Egyptian rulers. Instigated by Britain, the Khedive Ismail, the ruler of Egypt launched two military campaigns against Ethiopia (1875-76). In one of the campaigns, an American General, William W. Loring, invaded Ethiopia on behalf of Egypt in 1876 but was repulsed by Johannes at Gara. After this Britain tried to

14. he has been described as John II in some books.
See Galley, n. 8, p. 107.

plot diplomatic intrigues against the negus of Ethiopia. In this connection in 1877 and 1879 the Khedive ^{instigated} by Britain, sent two campaigns led by Gen. Charles against Ethiopia. But they failed in defeating Ethiopia. Thus under Johannes IV, "the kingdom was subjected to increasing pressure from three different but closely interconnected sources - Egypt, Europeans along the Red Sea and the Mahdists in the Sudan".¹⁵

In 1879 the Italian government took over the Rubbattino Company and declared its possession of Assab as Italian territory. Britain had another setback. Sudan's victory in the Mahdist movement in 1881 and expulsion of the Egyptians and British brought dramatic changes in favour of Ethiopia. Britain changed her plans from occupying Ethiopia to securing a hold over the Eastern Sudan to combat Mahdism. Britain encouraged Italian penetration into the north-east coast of Africa and into Ethiopia expecting to check French intrusion into Ethiopia and Sudan and in the process to weaken Italy in its conflict with Ethiopia. In 1883, Italy managed to get its conquests of the Red Sea coast recognised by Britain and established its colony in Eritrea. In 1882, Egypt again attacked Ethiopia and occupied the territories of Massawa, Keren and Harrar which were aligned with Sudan.

But, Egypt had to withdraw from the Keren, Massawa and Harrar, due to its inability to meet its debts, and this facilitated signing of an agreement in 1884 between Emperor

15. Ibid.

Johannes IV and Sir newett, the head of the British mission, which formalised Ethiopia's right to use Massawa and in return Johannes assured help to Britain to fight the Mendi.¹⁶ Britain further promised Egyptian withdrawal from Ethiopian territories and free transit for Ethiopian goods through Massawa "Under British protection".

In February 1885 an Italian expedition led by Admiral Ceirani captured the port of Massawa which denied Ethiopia an outlet to the sea. This action was in violation of the treaty signed in 1854 between Britain and Ethiopia.¹⁷ But instead of supporting Ethiopia Britain openly supported the Italian move, the motive being curbing the French intrusion into Africa and having a favourable balance of trade for Britain in Africa. However, Johannes annihilated the Italians in 1887 in the battle of Logali.¹⁸

At the end of 1888, Italy supported the revolt of Johannes's principal rival Menelek, the King of Shoa. In 1889 Johannes was persuaded by Britain to march against the Mendi but he was defeated in the battle of Metemma and was killed.

(a) Treaty of Uccialli

On the death of Johannes, Menelek supported by the Italians became the negus of all Ethiopia in 1889. But Menelek

16. See n. 12. Also see Galley, n.s, p. 109.

17. See Galley, n.s, p. 109. Also see E. Sylvia Pankhurst and Richard K.P. Pankhurst, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Last Phase of the Reunion Struggle (Walthamstow Press Ltd. Great Britain, p. 201.

18. See in Galley, n.s, pp. 109-10.

was forced to sign the treaty of Ucciali by which he recognized Italian occupation of Massawa and by implication their ambitions in the interior. This was the price he had to pay for Italian support to become the negus. The Italian foreign minister Crispi interpreted Article 17 of the Treaty as giving Italy a protectorate over Ethiopia. The Italian version emphasised that the Ethiopian foreign policy shall be conducted by the Italian government while the Amharic text stated that the emperor might avail himself of the services of Italy. The Italians started occupying Ethiopian territory beyond the boundaries fixed in the Treaty.

When in 1890 Italy proclaimed Ethiopia as an Italian protectorate (and Eritrea as an Italian colony. Menelek repudiated the claim and sent protest notes to European powers against this highhandedness of Italy. Instead of helping Ethiopia, these powers came to an understanding among themselves. Italy recognised on 1891 and 1892 British supremacy over Egypt and the Sudan and in return Britain recognised Italian occupation of Eritrea and a great part of the areas of Somali speaking people as Italian colonies and Ethiopia as an Italian protectorate.

In June 1894, despite Italian threat, Menelek concluded with a French company a contract on concessions for building a

19. See n. 12. p. 40, where Parkhurst writes: "The Italian version of Article XVII made it obligatory for the Emperor to conduct all his transactions with other powers through the Italian Government. On this ground the Italians declared they had established a protectorate over Ethiopia and were entitled to take control of Ethiopian affairs.

railway line between Djibouti and Harrar and laying a telegraph line.

Towards the end of 1894 due to a "series of uprisings against Italian authority in Eritrea", the Italian army proceeded towards the Tigre province of Ethiopia. They had received tacit British approval for this aggression. In September 1895 Menelik issued a manifesto against the Italian occupation of Tigre and united all the races to fight against Italian aggression. In December 1895 Menelik inflicted a serious defeat on the Italians at Amba Alagi. In January 1896 the Italian garrison at Nakale fort was defeated. From February 1896 to May 1896 the war continued and ultimately at the battle of Adowa, Menelik crushed the Italian army and in October 1896 the treaty of Addis Ababa was signed between Menelik and Italy.

(b) Treaty of Addis Ababa

This treaty reiterated the provisions of the Treaty of Ucciali but confirmed the Italian possession of Eritrea including the area up to the Mareb River which the Italians had occupied at the beginning of the campaign under the excuse of additional convention. Italy recognised Ethiopia as an independent sovereign state.

In 1897 Menelik signed treaties with Britain and France. They recognised Ethiopia's right to the province of Harrar. The region bordering Somaliland which had been in British possession was restored to Ethiopia. With French help, Menelik took possession of Ethiopia's western and south-western boundaries of Ogaden, Kafa, Timirra, Aussa, etc. (1897-1900).

In 1838, a Russian mission under Ashinov came to befriend Ethiopian co-religionists. Its real intention was to have a Russian colony on the Red Sea coast, but the mission came into military conflict with the French because Ashinov was trying to accomplish the mission by setting out from a port near French possessions of Obock. In 1895 and 1896 embassies were exchanged between Ethiopia and Russia. In 1896-98 Russia fought in campaigns in favour of Ethiopia because Russia wanted to have friendly relations with Ethiopia and so helped Ethiopia and sided with French against Britain and Italy when France helped Ethiopia. In this period, Russia also maintained a Red Cross hospital in Ethiopia.

(c) Tripartite Treaty

Meanwhile Menelik fell ill. Due to his illness, Britain, France and Italy apprehended instability in Ethiopia, and concluded the Tripartite Treaty in 1906 which divided Ethiopia into spheres of influence, assuring mutual protection of each other's spheres, and pledged for a joint military expedition in future eventuality. Britain's sphere included that area around Lake Tsana and the headwaters of the blue Nile. Italy's area was stretching from Eritrea to Somaliland. The French sphere was recognised over the area traversed by the railway from Addis Ababa to Djibouti.

World War I and After

After World War I when in 1919 the "Victor Powers" began to negotiate distribution of the war spoils. Italy proposed to Britain the division of Ethiopia into spheres of influence in order to weaken Ethiopia and France which had just completed the construction of the Addis Ababa.-Djibouti railway. Italy's aim was to dominate and capture Ethiopia.²⁰ That is why it tried to create among the Ethiopian local rulers like Lij Yasu and Ras Seyum, the Governor of Tigre Province, a sense of rebellion against the central government of Ethiopia, by giving military help to those local rulers so that Ethiopian unity can be broken and it can be captured by Italy. So, with Italian financial help, Yasu and Ras Seyum revolted against the central government of Ethiopia in 1920. But in 1921, Ras Tafari, the Central Ruler, defeated Yasu and with Seyum's help captured Yasu.

In spite of opposition from Britain and Italy, Ethiopia was finally admitted to the League of Nations in 1923 with the help of France. Britain and Italy opposed Ethiopia's admission into the League as they had claims on Ethiopian territory and support to the admission proposal would have weakened their territorial claims in Ethiopia.

In 1925 Britain sought to revive the Tripartite Treaty by asking for Italy's support to its project of building a dam on the Blue Nile below Lake Tsana. This proposal was rejected

20. See Endresik, The history of Black Africa, (Budapest, 1972) vol.2, p. 296.

by Ethiopia because it encroached on Ethiopian sovereignty. In the same year Britain concluded an agreement with Italy recognising spheres of interest in Ethiopia thereby giving consent to Italian occupation of a considerable portion of Ethiopian territory and for "obtaining from the Abyssinian government a concession to construct and run a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland".²¹

(a) Treaty with Italy

At this juncture, as a diplomatic move, Italy proposed in 1928 a treaty with Ethiopia which was signed at Addis Ababa emphasising continual peace and perpetual friendship between Italy and Ethiopia, assuring protection of each other's independence, and resolving to solve any unresolved disputes through conciliation and arbitration.

In another agreement with Ethiopia Italy was granted the right to construct a motor highway from the Italian occupied port of Assab (Eritrea) to the Ethiopian city of Dessie, and Ethiopia received a free zone in the port of Assab for 130 years.

The emperor of Ethiopia, Tafari, who succeeded Menelik signed friendship pacts with the United States in 1929 and with Japan in 1930 for expansion of commerce. He gave foreign nationals the right to lease land in Ethiopia for a period of 30 years. He secured from Britain, France and Italy the conclusion of a joint agreement of the four powers for arms

21. Ibid., p. 298. Also see Penkurst, n. 12, p. 47.

shipment to Ethiopia. The same year he granted to America a concession on the lake Tsana in order to curb British or Italian aggression.

Meanwhile, Italy was coming under Nazi German influence and was becoming a danger to Ethiopia and even to Europe. This led to Britain and Ethiopia coming closer and reviving the old plan to build a dam on Lake Tsana by joint Anglo-American capital. A British-Ethiopian Conference was also held with participation of Sudan and Egypt.

(b) Walwal Incident

In 1934 an Italian force stationed about a mile away near ^{Walwal} ~~Walwal~~, a territory inside Ethiopia, assaulted members of a joint Anglo-Ethiopian Commission when the members were demarcating the frontier between Ethiopia and the British Sudan. Ethiopia protested against this aggression to the League of Nations and in view of Italian counter charges Ethiopia demanded arbitration under 1928 Treaty provisions with Italy. But Italy refused to have any settlement through arbitration, and accused Ethiopia of preparing for an armed attack on Italian territories. The League of Nations asked for a halt to the conflict and declared Italy as the aggressor. France, which had an agreement with Italy in 1935 to give Italy 20 percent interest in the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line or supply of goods remained silent. Britain was inactive and America remained neutral under the Neutrality Act of 1935.

In this predicament, Ethiopia offered a joint Anglo-American Corporation a huge concession in the eastern part

of Ethiopia for oil and mineral extraction for 75 years to which Italy protested and ultimately the concession was not granted.

(e) War on Ethiopia

In 1935, without declaration of war and inspite of the 1928 Treaty of Friendship, Italy attacked Ethiopia and by 1936 captured Addis Abeba. Britain and France acted in support of Italy and tacitly acknowledged the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. The Soviet Union condemned the Italian invasion and maintained that she stood for the total independence of Ethiopia. Despite Soviet opposition and protests Britain, France and Italy signed in 1935 an agreement known as Hoare-Laval agreement which proposed adjustment and exchange of territory among themselves giving Italy the provinces of northern Tigre, most of the Danakil, and Ogaden. This agreement was signed by the colonial powers so that Britain would not have to enforce the oil sanctions passed by the League of Nations against Italy and a grand Italo-French Front would be built against Germany. Despite this move, Britain and France failed to get Italy into their camp. Italy remained with Nazi Germany.

In 1936 Italy formally declared the annexation of Ethiopia, as a part of Italian East Africa. Thus it violated the Tripartite Treaty of 1906, the Hague Protocol of 1925, the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928, and the principles of League of Nations. Italy had a grand design to use the fortified areas of Eritrea and the high central plateau of Ethiopia on the approaches to Addis Ababa for launching a war.

In 1938 Britain concluded an agreement with Nazi ally Italy in which Britain was obliged to give de jure recognition to Italy's Empire in Ethiopia and to propose before the League of Nations removal of ban against such recognition by the League itself.

Period of World War II

Britain could not benefit from this treaty for long. In June 1940, Italy entered World War II by declaring war against Britain and France. In September 1940, the Italians attacked Egypt from Libya, with the intention of penetrating into Egypt from the West and to start an offensive from Ethiopia and Eritrea against the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. In January 1941, Britain aided by the Ethiopian guerrilla forces attacked the Italian areas: Eritrea, Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland.

By the end of 1941 the whole of Ethiopia was liberated from Italy and in 1942 an agreement was signed between Ethiopia and Britain which stipulated that Ethiopia would be moved from the position of occupied enemy territory to the rule of the Emperor with British advisers. The main aspect of this agreement was that Ogaden province should remain under British military occupation.²² In 1944 another agreement was signed between Ethiopia and Britain which stipulated that Ogaden and the Reserved Area covering the railway line and its entire zone as well as Eritrea would remain under British occupation.

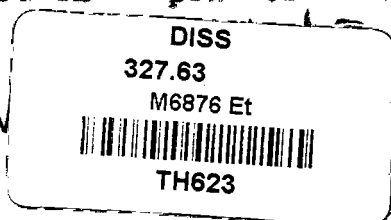
22. See n.2, vol.3, p. 118.

Under the 1944 agreement Addis Ababa - Djibouti railway again passed under the management of Ethiopia. Technical personnel were made available to Ethiopia by the United States. Also towards the close of the war United States sent to Ethiopia a technical mission to explore natural resources for post-war economic development of the country. This ^{marked} the beginning of penetration of America into Ethiopia.

From the above account it is clear that up to the nineteenth century there was no united Ethiopia in the present form. There were a number of small territories under local chiefs which were constantly fighting with each other for supremacy.

Ethiopian Provinces

This conflict went on since the Axumite Kingdom of third century till the entry of the European powers and partition of the Horn of Africa under their sphere of influence. During the pre-partition days as we have discussed sometimes the Kingdom of Shoa was in supremacy over the whole territory or sometimes the Tigre, and at others the Gallas had the central power including military and political control over the vast areas like Amhara etc. So it is difficult to define the actual territory of Ethiopia till 1889 when Menelik came to power. Menelik's contribution has to be recognised in the fact that despite the presence of powerful European powers with modern weapons of warfare he succeeded in retaining the



independence of some portion of Ethiopia while others were lost to the imperialist powers.

Eritrea and the Ogaden were the two areas which had to be sacrificed to the invaders in order to retain the independence. So the history of Eritrea has to be seen in this perspective. It will be unjust or unhistorical to say that before Menelik Ethiopia was one unit and that Eritrea was a portion of it. Similarly it will be wrong to agree that Eritrea was not part of Ethiopia. Eritrea was lost by Ethiopia to Italians in a war. Italians, British, French and Egyptians all tried to occupy it and they had to face the armies which were raised by the King of Ethiopia composed of various tribes including the Amharae, the Shoas, the Tigres etc.

(a) Problem of Eritrea

With this historical background, the problem of Eritrea may be discussed with greater clarity.

If we look into the ancient history of Eritrea we find sufficient evidence of stone inscriptions from the Christian era showing that Eritrea was a part of Ethiopian realm with the capital at Axum, the latter is still in Ethiopia and its famous sea port, Adulis is on the sea coast of Eritrea.

23. See E. Sylvia Pankhurst and Richard K.P. Pankhurst, n. 17, p. 91. She describes that the important work of Francisco Alvarez, the Portuguese priest, a member of the mission from the King of Portugal to the King of Ethiopia, published at Coimbra in 1540, translated in English by Lord Stanley of Alderley (1890); the classic history of Ethiopia by the learned Ludolphus (Frankfort 1681), London, 1684), French physician (J Poncet's accounts, published in Paris in 1713, James Bruce's accounts of 1768, 1773, 1813. Lord Valentia's travel (1802-1806)

In 1885, Italy took possession of the Eritrean coast with the encouragement of Great Britain, which was interested in Italian collaboration in its fight against Sudanese Mendi.²⁴

This was done under the treaty of Uccinelli of 1889 which was forced upon the Ethiopian Emperor by the Italians. The Italian Foreign Minister Crispi had tried to interpret Article 17 of the treaty as giving Italy a protectorate over Ethiopia. This was challenged by Ethiopia.

Menelek protested to European powers against this violation of Ethiopian sovereignty by Italy. The protests had little effect.

By the treaties of 1891 and 1892 between Britain and Italy, Italy recognised the British supremacy over Egypt and Sudan, and Britain recognised Italian occupation of Eritrea. Another tripartite treaty concluded between Britain, France and Italy in 1906 reiterated that Eritrea belonged to Italy. The treaty of Addis Ababa concluded after the battle of Adowa in 1895-96 confirmed Eritrea as an Italian protectorate.

In 1925 Britain concluded an agreement with Italy, giving consent to Italy for "obtaining from the Abyssinian Government a concession to construct and run a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland".²⁵

from last page... and Henry Salt's (1809-1810) works prove that all that is known as Eritrea today was then Ethiopia.

24. See Eritrea: A Victim of UN Decision and of Ethiopian Aggression. Appeal of the Eritrean People to the 26th Session of the General Assembly (Eritrean Liberation Front, People's Liberation Forces Foreign Mission, 1971, New York), p. 8.

25. See n. 21.

In an agreement between Italy and Ethiopia in 1928 Italy was granted the right to construct a motor highway from the Italian port of Assab (Britrea) to the Ethiopian city of Dessie, and Ethiopia received a free zone in the port of Assab for 130 years.

We have already noted the signing of Treaty of Friendship between Italy and Ethiopia in 1928 and subsequent Wal Wal incident in which the Italian forces fired into Ethiopian territories and the subsequent Italian invasion capturing Ethiopia and Britrea in 1935-36, the Italian defeat and eventual 1944 agreement between Ethiopia, Britain and France.

After the War the British administration tried to annex large Ethiopian areas. They stressed on the future status of Britrea specifying that Great Britain fought against Italy for Ethiopia's defence. Britain demanded that highland part of Britrea should be merged with Tigre province of Ethiopia and along with Axum should be placed under British protection for 25 years after which people would be asked to give their opinion.²⁶ The Ethiopians knew that it was really a clever move on the part of Britain to annex Britrea on the plea that it had aided Ethiopia against Italy. The military chronicles prove that this aid was negligible.

The condition of Britrea under Italian occupation was vividly depicted in a pamphlet "The First of the Freed", issued by the British Information Ministry, which described Britrea

26. see n. 23.

and ex-Italian Somaliland as "two over-capitalised bankrupt semi-deserts, which had never been self-supporting and which had never intended to be self-supporting. The territories, had not industries and little agriculture. Their imports for years had greatly exceeded exports, they had been maintained hitherto only by enormous grants-in-aid from Italy." ²⁷ Eritrea was only used as "an outlet for manufactured goods." ²⁸ This shows the poor economic condition of Eritrea under Italian rule.

Emperor Haile Selassie appealed for the reunion of Eritrea with Ethiopia as both had common origin, common language, common tradition, common national life, and common economy. All ^{appeals} ~~officials~~ were set aside. The British rule continued the same colonial type administration in Eritrea as the Italians and the Italians were given all the privileges at the cost of the Eritreans which angered the latter.

The Four Powers Inquiry Commission, consisting of Britain, France, United States and USSR which was set up in 1945 after World War II to determine the future of Eritrea, stated that the representative's opinion could indicate peoples' wishes on the future of Eritrea. The Inquiry Commission made four recommendations: to divide Eritrea between Ethiopia and Sudan, or to return it to Italy, or to grant full independence, or to have unconditional union with Ethiopia.

27. See n. 23, p. 25.

28. Ibid., p. 27. Also see n.24, pp. 10-11.

Role of the United Nations (UN)

The UN General Assembly appointed its own Commission of Inquiry which made three recommendations: union of Eritrea with Ethiopia, or federation with Ethiopia, or independence of Eritrea.

A letter signed by G.D.H. Cole, Geoffrey Cooper, Member of Parliament of Britain, and the Honorary Secretary of International Ethiopian Council, Sylvie Pankhurst, reminded the United Nations that the decision of the Paris Peace Conference which abolished the claim of Italy from all former colonies, should be upheld by the United Nations.²⁹ They laid emphasis upon the opinion of the Four Power Inquiry Commission that majority of Eritrean people were opposed to Italian rule. They also stressed that the two East African ex-colonies - Eritrea and Benadir (ex-Italian Somaliland) - were geographically parts of Ethiopia, which were severed at the end of 19th century and that the population of Eritrea and Benadir were racially akin to people of Ethiopia. They emphasised that the people of Eritrea and Benadir shared one or other of the two religions of Ethiopia: Christianity and Islam. They appealed that justice and welfare of the peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea could be achieved only by union of Eritrea with Ethiopia.

The proposal of Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, and U. Forza, Italian Foreign Minister, which asked the United

29. See n. 23, pp. 173-74.

Nations to agree to align Western Eritrea with Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, to align Eastern Eritrea with Ethiopia and to keep Somalia under Italian trusteeship was rejected by the United Nations in the final voting.

In a speech before the Eritrean Inquiry Commission the Norwegian delegation gave historical proof showing how Eritrea was a part of Ethiopia.³⁰

Views of the Socialist Countries

In the plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 1950, Amalunien, the representative of the Soviet Union, emphasized that the Soviet Union has consistently supported the proposal that Eritrea should be granted independence as all people possess a right to self-determination and national independence.³¹

The Soviet delegate pointed out that in considering the fate of Eritrea which was one of the former Italian colonies, the United Nations must take a decision which should satisfy the desire of the Eritrean people for freedom from oppression. He pointed out that the arguments used against the proposal that Eritrea should be granted immediate independence were those made in defence of colonial system. As for example, the colonial powers argued that Eritrea was a backward area and was not ready for independence, that an independent Eritrea would not be able to ensure its own economic development and

30. See n. 23, p. 234.

31. See General Assembly Official Records, Fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, vol. 1, 19 September-15 December 1950, New York, p. 536.

political stability. The Soviet delegate maintained that if federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia was a compromise solution, it was a compromise among the colonial powers as it was being imposed on the Eritreans and also on Ethiopia and it would be equally unsatisfactory to Ethiopia.

The Socialist countries argued that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Eritrea because they along with the feudal lords of Ethiopia have perpetuated social and economic exploitation and oppression in Eritrea and if Eritrea would be federated with Ethiopia, the latter with its own shattered economy might not be able to make Eritrea economically self-dependent. That is why they ^{demand} that the Eritreans should be given a free choice to determine their future.

The delegates of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic supported Soviet and Polish proposal which provided for immediate independence of Eritrea, for withdrawal of British occupation troops within three months and for giving Ethiopia access to the sea through the port of Assab.

In December 1950, after a strenuous effort of patriotic Eritrean unionists, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to restore to Ethiopia its long lost Red Sea ports and to federate Eritrea to Ethiopia under the Ethiopian crown. This resolution put forth by ^{USA} U.S.A. was to be effective in 1952 after the Federal Act and the Eritrean constitution were ratified by

the Emperor of Ethiopia and by an Eritrean Assembly by a majority of the Eritreans. The resolution pledged fullest respect for Eritrean institutions, traditions, language, etc.; widest self-government; full autonomy; executive, legislative, judicial powers to Eritreans; right to collect taxes; right to have their own budget, their citizenship right under Eritrean constitution, with the provision in Eritrean constitution for ratification of the Federal Act.³³

United States Position on Eritrea

When the five power commission's report was examined by the General Assembly, the representative of the United States strongly opposed the recommendation made jointly by the delegations of Pakistan and Guatemala for the independence of Eritrea on the ground that it did not satisfy Ethiopia's claims, and submitted a draft resolution. Introducing his plan for a federation in the General Assembly, he said; "Independence for Eritrea is not practicable either now or in the future, because it ignores the legitimate interests of Ethiopia and would only increase tension in East-Africa."³⁴ This implies that the United States was eager on Ethiopia-Eritrea federation

33. See no. 21. Also see E. Sylvia Pankmurist, n.12, pp. 61-64. See UN Resolution no. 390(v) on Eritrea, General Assembly: Official Records Fifth Session, Supplement No.20 (A/1775) (New York, 1950) pp. 20-22. UN Resolution no. 617 (VII) in General Assembly: Official Records (Seventh Session, Supplement no.20 (A/2361) (New York, 1952), p. 9.

34. See n.24, pp. 20-21.

to safeguard the Ethiopian interests and not the Eritrean interests.

United States which was so long giving heavy military aid to Ethiopia to fight against the Eritrean secessionists since 1953, took a lukewarm attitude in supporting the Ethiopian government after the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution when a military government adopting socialist orientations took over in Ethiopia. In 1976 USA warned Ethiopia that the former would stop giving aid if Ethiopia would fight against the Muslim rebels.

The cause of change of position by United States from "total support to Haile Selassie regime against the Eritrean secessionists" to "indifferent attitude towards the Ethiopian socialist government against the Eritrean secessionists" after 1974 would be examined in a historical perspective.

In November 1962 the Eritrean Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to become a province of Ethiopia as it was felt that this would lead to greater economic development of Eritrea.³⁵

During 1962-65 period, a very fast industrialization took place in Eritrea and new industries like textile, shoes, leather, foodstuff, beverages and dairy were established.³⁶ For industrialization foreign capital was freely permitted which within a few years increased economic dependence and cultural penetration of foreign values regarding food habits, dress etc.

35. See Ramon G. Bhargadwaj, n. , p.86. "The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa." (Sterling Publishers, 1979), p.86. The Eritrean secessionists regard the inclusion of Eritrea into Ethiopia as a province as in 1962 as annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia. See n.24,p.82.

36. See Bhargadwaj, n.35, p.87.

During the 1965-74 period Haile Selassie regime encouraged heavy investment of western capital in Ethiopia and Eritrea on new industries which resulted in a neglect of the agricultural sector, growth of a dependent economy, and extreme vulnerability of this economy to the European demand. The Eritrean economy was dependent on the export of raw materials whose prices in the world market widely fluctuated. The process of development was also dependent on the expensive technology introduced by the foreign companies. So the outflow of capital exceeded inflow of resources for investment. Since the foreign companies had head quarters in Addis Ababa, the middle men sitting in Addis got larger share of the benefits which gradually led to economic underdevelopment of Eritrea. This process was ^{resented} resented by the Eritrean people and resulted in the emergence of Eritrean secessionist movement. This inference is based on the ^{report} report of the Governor General of Eritrea, Ras Asrata Kassa who observed in 1970, that the Eritrean secessionism was mainly a socio-economic problem which could be resolved by the economic and social development of Ethiopia. ³⁷

Eritrean Secessionism

The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was formally launched in 1961 and its initial efforts were limited to propaganda in the Arab countries for liberation of Eritrea from

~~36. (last page contd...) Ibid., p. 87.~~

37. Ibid., p. 102.

Ethiopia. It relied on Muslim separatism, traditional attitudes
38
and anti-Zionism.

The basis of the support by the Arab countries to the secessionist movement in Eritrea changed from religious to political support in the mid-1960s because the old Ethiopian regime of Haile Selassie was regarded by the Arab world (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan) as a collaborator of Israel and an opponent of the Arabs.
39

The post-1967 period saw a lull in the movement because of change in the attitude of Arab powers. Sudan withdrew her support to the movement partly because of the Arab debacle in Middle East War and partly because Ethiopia abandoned the cause of the Southern Sudanese rebels.

During 1961-69 period, mostly the lowlander Muslims, Beni Amer and Danakil, supported the movement because of economic and religious reasons.
40
Arabs aroused the Islamic sentiments of the Eritrean Muslims. But the Christians who inhabited the Eritrean plateau wanted Ethiopian rule.

In 1970, ~~these three groups were~~ the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) was formed which advocated rapid implementation of such popular measures as construction of houses for the poor, improved road system, etc. Simultaneously, the Popular Liberation Front (PLF) was established with a demand for closer relations with the Arabs.

38. Ibid., p. 126.

39. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

40. Ibid., p. 103.

Even in 1974 these three groups were hostile to each other because of ideological reasons, i.e., ~~SPPLF~~, ELF and PLF were tilting towards Arab and Islamic support and TPLF was having a radical posture.

(b) Problem of Ogaden

On the question of Ogaden, we find two types of arguments given by Somalis and the Ethiopians. It is necessary to discuss both viewpoints.

Somalian Arguments on Ogaden Issue

According to Somalians, the Ogaden area was awarded to Ethiopia to induce her to agree to the colonial arrangements prepared by Europeans (Italians and British) during the period 1885-1905.⁴¹ The foreign powers, as emphasized by Somalians, won the administration of local Somali tribesmen by upholding their claims to their pastures in the Ogaden area. But this strategy antagonized Ethiopia which under the treaties of 1897-1908 had got the right to collect taxes in the area of Ogaden.

In 1899 Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Hassan (Mad Mullah) started his rebellion against foreign domination, partition of grazing land, for vindication of the Somali code of law and Somali culture. This rebellion affected the Ogaden area also. The Europeans projected the Ethiopians as the real evil and themselves as the protector of the Somalian grazing pastures in Ogaden. The British had given Ethiopia the right to collect

41. Ibid., p. 29.

taxes in Ogaden, but seeing Hassan's rebellion as a threat to their colonial intrusion into the Horn they tactically played Ethiopia against the Ogaden, Somalis, posing themselves as protectors of the nomads in Ogaden.

To oppose any Ethiopian penetration into Ogaden the Somalis looked for British help but due to the doubtful nature of Britain they fought against Britain also, but it was not successful.

As already noted, the Walwal incident provided an excuse for Italy to march via Ogaden into Ethiopia in 1936 and Ogaden was included in Somalia. After the defeat of Italy in World War II, the Ogaden area was given to Ethiopia under Anglo-Ethiopian treaties of 1942 and 1944. But, the British Foreign Secretary, Bevin proposed trusteeship system for Somali territories and the Ogaden region. According to Somalis, the British were willing to keep Ogaden under their control, but due to world sympathy for Ethiopia, a victim of Italian invasion, Ethiopia got back Ogaden in 1948. This angered the Somalis.

The Somalis alleged that Ogaden was transferred to Ethiopia after disbursement of some £91,000 among the Ogaden⁴² clansmen by the departing British administration.

A Somali government publication of 1974 blames the Ethiopian government of continuously harassing the Somali population of Ogaden by levying unlimited taxes on the livestock

42. See I.M. Lewis, The Modern History of Somaliland (London, 1965), pp. 129-30.

of nomads, which has forced some of the Ogaden Somalis to come to Somalia as refugees from the portion of Somali territory under Ethiopian colonisation.⁴³ The Somalian arguments show how the colonial powers like Britain, Italy and France played Ethiopia and Somalia against each other on the Ogaden issue.

Ethiopian Arguments on Ogaden Issue

According to the Ethiopians, the boundary between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, although defined by the treaties of 1897 and 1908, remained unclear and undemarcated. The Italian and British colonial designs continued to create obstacles in the correct interpretation of the 1908 Ethiopian-Italian Agreement so as to keep the boundary problem alive in order to exploit it at an opportune time.⁴⁴ As already stated, this

43. See Somalia Democratic Republic Government Publication, Mogadishu, June 1974, p. 34.

44. See Mesfin Wolde Marian, Somalia: The Problem Child of Africa (Addis Ababa, 1977), p.7. See also n.24, p. 112. When a joint Anglo-Ethiopian Commission was demarcating the frontier between Ethiopia and British Sudan in 1934 in the Ethiopian territory of Wel Wal, Italian forces assaulted the members of the Commission and from February 1935 to September 1935 Italy was amassing troops on the border of Ethiopia and in September 1935 attacked Ethiopia and captured almost the whole of it by April 1936. Hundreds of thousands of ill-equipped Ethiopians fought bravely against the Italian aggression by adopting guerrilla tactics. Till 1939 guerrilla warfare continued against the Italians. In the autumn 1939 the Ethiopian guerrilla fighters started large-scale armed actions in the central provinces of the country like Amhara, Shoa and Godjan. In June 1940, Italy declared war on Britain and in September 1940 Italy attacked Egypt from Libya, and then attacked Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from Ethiopia and Eritrea. In January 1941 the British troops aided by the Ethiopian guerrillas and the Italian "native" army started the offensive against the Italians and by ~~November~~ and by November 1941 whole of Ethiopia was liberated.

At the end of World War II, Ogaden was ceded to Britain because it had helped Ethiopia in the war (Article VII of the agreement of 1944.)

unresolved problem sparked the famous Walwal incident in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and served as an excuse for Italy to invade Ethiopia.⁴⁵

According to Ethiopians the people of Ogaden have not had the same type of colonial and historical experience as the tribes of former British and Italian Somaliland who surrendered their authority, freedom and sovereignty to the British East Africa Company. These "Native" or tribal chiefs of British and Italian Somaliland had to sign a Form called Form (b) to surrender their sovereignty which states: "(Name of chief) hereby declared that he has placed himself and all his territories, peoples and subjects under the protection, rule and government of the British East Africa company and its sovereign rights of government over all his territories, countries, peoples and subjects...."⁴⁶ So, the Ethiopians argued that the people of Ogaden who did not surrender their sovereignty are distinct from these tribes and Somalia cannot have a claim on Ogaden as a part of its territories.

All colonial powers recognized these treaties and accepted each other's positions. ^{with} ~~with~~ the result that after world war II, defeated Italy retained its former colony of Somaliland, against Ethiopia's protest, as a UN trusteeship.

45. Ibid., Also see Mesfin Wolde Marian, "The Background of the Etnio-Somalia Boundary Dispute", The Journal of Modern African Studies, vol 2 ¹¹ ~~11~~,² (1964), pp. 189-219.

46. See Mesfin Wolde Marian, n. 44, p. 23.

for ten more years. During these years, in spite of UN resolution to solve the boundary problem, Italy was not interested in a fair and legal solution of the problem. As a matter of fact, at the time of independence, Somalia inherited the undemarcated boundary problem and the problem of interpreting the 1908 Ethiopian-Italian Agreement which stipulated the boundary between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. The independent Somalia took advantage of the vagueness of 1908 Agreement to demand Greater Somalia.

When Britain defeated Italy and captured Eritrea and Ogaden from its possession as stated, it had an evil design to keep both under its domination, under the plea of "protection" to Ethiopia. Britain also wanted to take advantage of the vagueness and unclarity of the 1897 and 1908 treaties concluded between Ethiopia and Italy regarding the boundary between Ethiopia and British Somaliland and expressed this desire by entertaining the idea of 'Greater Somalia' objective in 1946, which was exploited by Somalia in 1960 when it became independent.

On 29 April 1946 the British Foreign Secretary Bevin stated to the Four-Power Conference that British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the adjacent part of Ethiopia should be amalgamated as a trust territory under British⁴⁷ for a decent economic life of the nomads.

But both the Article 78 of Chapter 12 of UN Charter and Article 7 of the Ethiopian British Agreement of 1944 expressly

47. Cited by Margery Pertan, ^hThe Government of Ethiopia (London, 1947), p. 447, quoted from n. 43, pp. 14-15.

went against the British intention of keeping Ogaden under a trusteeship system.

All this historical evidence shows that Ogaden is a part of Ethiopia, but the colonial powers like Italy and Britain violated treaty agreements on the Ogaden issue and gave Somalia a weapon to unjustly claim Ogaden as a part in its Greater Somalia objective.

As regards Somalian argument in favour of applying the principle of self-determination in case of Ogaden, the Ethiopians argued that Article 2(4) of UN Charter, the report of a Commission of the League of Nations and the declaration of the Conference of Heads of State of the Organization of African unity of July 1964, report of the 26th session of the International Law Commission of the United Nations expressly rejected the Somalian claim.⁴⁸

Arguments can also be given against Somalian version of the principle of self-determination.⁴⁹

As emphasised by Lord Acton and Bluntschli, co-existence of multiplicity of nationalities, can ensure vigour of the state and the progress of humanity.

Critics like G.C. Field have pointed out that the protagonists of the self-determination principle wrongly show connection between nationalism and democracy.

48. See n. 43, pp. 46-47.

49. See Anil Roy and Bhattacharya, Political Theory: Ideas and Institutions (Calcutta, 1973), pp. 83-85.

Writers like Morgenthau and Laski have pointed out that principle of self-determination would lead to disruption of existing states and to the rise of multiplicity of petty states which can lead to increase in international conflicts.⁵⁰

The right of self-determination may entail twisting of the qualities of truthfulness, friendliness, by the nationalists to serve their own cause.

As emphasised by Haynes, on the ground of irredentism or for a more secure frontier and an outlet to the sea, a new nation-state may indulge in intervention and commit military aggression under the cover of self-determination.

The principle of self-determination has the primary aim of political independence of a group. But it does not take into account the material welfare of the people.

As emphasised by Bertrand Russell, a blind hyper-nationalist sentiment may prove to be an impediment to the development of internationalism. He says that when the contemporary state-systems are compelled by the natural course of events to come closer, any effort to seek solutions along nationalist rather than internationalist approach, is fraught with danger.

Thus the arguments of all these writers go against the Somali argument of all the principle of self-determination for Uganda.

Both the arguments provided by Somalis and the Ethiopians highlight the manoeuvring of the colonial powers

50. Ibid.

like Britain, France, and Italy, to play both Ethiopia and Somalia against each other on the Ogaden issue. The Ethiopian argument emphasizes that on the basis of provisions of International Law Commission Report, the Charter of the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, former League of Nations, and views of other writers, Somalia's claim on Ogaden is unjust.

(c) Problem of Sea Outlet for Ethiopia

This problem is an important one for Ethiopia in the face of its commercial, strategic, and geopolitical location, and in this respect the question of Ethiopia-Djibouti railway line, comes into picture because this railway line serves as the only sea outlet for Ethiopia.

As regards the sea outlet for Ethiopia Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia had entered into an agreement with the French. The Agreement stipulated that if the colony of Djibouti was ceded by France, it was to be ceded to Ethiopia because Djibouti was the terminus of the railway to Addis Ababa, which was one of the main routes by which Ethiopian produce was exported. ⁵¹ Sylvia Pankhurst has argued that Ethiopia had a legal and natural claim to territories which gave her access to the sea and which she needs for her trade and commerce. At the time of Djibouti's independence, Ethiopia did not stake any claim on it although the railway line passing through it was crucial for the economy of Ethiopia.

51. See n. 23, p. 87.

From the time when the colonial powers like Britain, France, Italy, started setting their foot in Ethiopia, they had an evil eye on the sea outlet of Ethiopia.

We have referred earlier that in the 1870s and 1880s Britain tried to thwart Ethiopian effort to secure a sea outlet and used Egypt against Ethiopia. In 1882 Egypt had attacked Ethiopia. These British and Italian designs forced the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik to conclude an agreement with a French Company on concessions for the building of a railway line between Djibouti and Harrar, the construction of a telegraphic line, etc. He made Djibouti as the main sea outlet for Ethiopia and used the railway line for import and export of commodities as well as arms against the Italian threat to Ethiopian sovereignty.

Consequently in a Tripartite Treaty of 1906 French occupation of Djibouti and of the railway zone was once again confirmed. By 1919 France had completed the railway line between Djibouti and Addis Ababa.

In 1934-35 when Ethiopia was facing an Italian aggression, France, which had already tilted towards Italy, concluded an agreement to give Italy 20 percent interest in the Addis-Ababa-Djibouti railway line. This badly affected the economy of Ethiopia, as it was mainly depending on this line for its import and export on which the Italians levied very heavy taxes.

In 1944, in the Agreement between Britain and Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway again passed into the hands of Ethiopia and enabled it to boost its trade and commerce.

As already stated, during the discussion on Eritrean issue in the United Nations General Assembly in 1950, the Socialist countries like Soviet Union, Poland, etc. had given importance to Ethiopia's claim for an access to the sea through the port of Assab to ensure Ethiopia's economic security, whereas the Western powers had paid lukewarm support. The Socialist countries had stressed that a sea outlet for Ethiopia was very crucial for its economic survival.

Importance of the Red Sea

As stated, Red Sea is strategically and geographically very important. Due to its nearness to the Gulf of Aden, Babel Mandeb Straits, and all oil going to the Western world must pass through that way and so whoever controls the oil flow, will control the entire area of the Horn.

That is why the Red Sea, as a link between Asia and Europe, as the "life-line of Israel" (a choke point as referred to by William H. Lewis)⁵², is very significant in the sense that even the Arab powers want to have their dominance over the area as shown in subsequent chapters. For example, their recent instigation of Somalia to attack Ethiopia is mainly due to their intention to make the Red Sea an Arab Lake, to dominate the Horn area, to make the countries of

52. See n. 1, p. 6.

the Horn dependent on them for their socio-economic development and to prevent Ethiopian socialist government from having a sea outlet for its trade and commerce, for flow of essential goods for the economic development of its people.

In this context, as emphasised by a leading Soviet analyst V. ^K~~Dudryastaev~~,_K

the imperialists are hatching plans to turn the Red Sea into a closed Arab Lake with the aim of controlling the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. From their viewpoint, Ethiopia is an obstacle on the path to the realization of these plans. Finally, it is important for the imperialists - the US above all - to divert the Arab people's attention from West Asian affairs to and focus it on events in the horn of Africa One of the goals of imperialist policy in the horn of Africa is under cover of an anti-Ethiopian campaign and by mobilising the Arab countries' attention in the wrong direction, to make it easier for Egypt to strike a deal with Israel. It is with this purpose that Somalia and its backers are trying to internationalise the conflict in the Horn of Africa. 53

(d) Colonial Powers' Domination over Red Sea

The colonial powers like Britain, Italy and France had their evil intention of dominating the Red Sea are as far back as the 1850s.

In the 1840s Britain concluded agreements with Ethiopia with the intention of dominating the Red Sea port of Massawa.

53. See Izvestia (Moscow), 29 January 1978.

But in 1855 on the plea of checking Russian advance towards Turkey, it reversed the earlier assurance which provided for the return of Red Sea Port of Massawa to Ethiopia.

After the opening of the Suez Canal in the 1860s the hinterland of the Red Sea Coast became very important to the European powers for commercial purposes. The Italian Rubattino Company had also acquired some possessions on the Red Sea Coast in 1869 for commercial and strategic dominance. It was not before 1853 that Italy managed to get the recognition of Britain on its possession on the Red Sea Coast.

In the early part of the 20th century the colonial powers signed a number of treaties to retain their say in the Red Sea, e.g. the Tripartite Treaties of 1906, 1925, Italian-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928, British-Ethiopian treaties of 1942, 1944. These treaties also helped them in ^{dominating} ~~eliminating~~ Ethiopia, Eritrea and Ogaden.

Even today the Red Sea as an international passage is very important and Europe and U.S.A. which have interests in the Arab oil regard it necessary to dominate this area. Today the important aim of the US backed Arabian diplomacy is to control "the most vital part of Assab on the Eritrean coast and to blockade the whole line from Ogaden to the north-west of Djibouti. The purpose is to cut Ethiopia completely from the Red Sea and thus to form a continuous Arab coastal from the ^Gulf to the Suez and to the Horn of Africa. Egypt's role

is to provide logistical support to the northern princers and
naval patrol and armed transport in the Red Sea.*⁵⁴

As regards the strategic importance of Red Sea it can
be emphasized that, at Babel-Mandeb, the Red Sea route, is very
narrow. Here the Arabian peninsula and the African Coast are
at a distance of only 22 miles from each other. The Red Sea
and the Indian Ocean have their meeting point here through the
Gulf of Aden. Due to the presence of Perim island within the
narrow strait, the navigable area is reduced to 16½ miles only.
Whoever dominates this Red Sea route, can control the entrance
to the Gulf of Suez, Sham-el-Sneikh, and the Gulf of Eilat.
And because Ethiopia badly needs a sea outlet, this Red Sea
outlet is very important for it.⁵⁵

The Red Sea and its crucially located choke-point at
Bab-el-Mandeb act as the physical link between West Asia and
the horn. The mainland Christian Ethiopians are historically
connected with Israelis. Israel has the capacity to attack
Somalia, Sudan and other Arab areas on the horn to make the
Red Sea well-protected for her shipping, trade and commerce.
So, the sensitive zone of West Asia includes not only Israel,
Egypt, North Yemen, etc. but also the Somalian and Eritrean
coasts which are near the Saudi Arabian oil fields and the
Red Sea oil lanes.⁵⁶ Hence all this is important for Ethiopia
as it needs a sea outlet through Red Sea for its trade and
commerce.

54. See Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 22 August, 1977.

55. See n. 34, p. 7.

56. See n. 34, pp. 148-49.

The Red Sea forms Ethiopia's important border in the east, two sea ports - Massawa and Assab lie on this sea-lane, and among the three Red Sea states it occupies longest coast line. The Red Sea is Ethiopia's major maritime gateway to her international commerce.⁵⁷

So, the problem of sea outlet for Ethiopia and the importance of Red Sea are both interrelated.

In this context, it is necessary to discuss certain islands which are situated near the Red Sea.

Kanran island with an area of 70 square miles, in the southeast of the Red Sea was in British occupation from 1915 to 1967. Britain took over the islands from Turkey in the World War I. The inhabitants numbering about 400 opted in favour of remaining in the republic of Turkey. However,⁵⁸ North Yemen occupied the islands in 1972.

Another set of islands called Dhalak islands are situated in the southwest of the Red Sea, outside the Massawa port, a former wartime British naval base, belong to Ethiopia. In early seventies, there were speculative reports in the Arab press that the Israelis have been using some of the Ethiopian islands in the Red Sea.⁵⁹

57. See Hindustan Times, 6 January 1973.

58. See Alice Taylor, The Middle East (Praeger Publication, 1972), p. 118.

59. See Hindustan Times, 4 May 1980.

Conclusion

The issues which have been taken in this chapter are the historical position and the Somali claim to the Ogaden, the Eritrean Secessionist movement, problem of sea outlet for Ethiopia, and the importance of the Red Sea. We have seen that on the problems of Ogaden and Eritrea the colonial powers like Great Britain, France and Italy have largely been responsible for aggravating and confusing the situation. But for their diplomacy and manoeuvring, the problem of Ogaden and Eritrea would not have been so much aggravated. They posed as real protectors of the people of the area whereas they actually tried to exploit these areas for their own economic interest and imperialist designs. As regards the sea outlet for Ethiopia we have seen that it is most essential for its trade and commerce, import and export. As regards the importance of the Red Sea we have seen that as a link between Asia and Europe it is a strategic area where oil passes to West Asia and whoever controls this area controls the oil passing through it. That is why the Arab powers backed by United States went to dominate this area for their own strategic, economic reasons.

Chapter II

ROLE OF SUPER POWERS IN
ETHIOPIA (1950-1973)

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In the previous chapter we have given the historical perspective of the genesis of various Ethiopian problems, the manipulation, and domination of colonial powers like Britain, France and Italy over Ethiopia to aggravate the problems of Ogaden and Eritrea through various treaties and alliances, conduct of wars since mid-17th century till 1950. In this chapter we shall discuss how the United States and the Soviet Union came to play a dominant role in Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia, from 1950 up to 1973.

What is a Super Power

In this context 'Super Power' may be defined as that power which is capable of exerting pressure on another country in its domestic policy formulation and implementation in economic, social, political and military fields and also influence and dominate the international affairs of that country or region.¹

In international affairs a Super Power is one which is politically and economically well-equipped and which militarily and ideologically dominates weaker or backward countries through international military pacts and organizations like

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- (1) Super Power has been defined as "Power that is excessive, abnormal, or superior to that which exists; (2) A theoretical political entity conceived as having authority over other states especially over the most powerful states".
See Webster International Dictionary, p. 2533.
As emphasized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Super Power is one which is capable of inflicting maximum possible damage on any other country within the shortest possible time.

the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or Warsaw Pact Organization (WPO).

The Super Powers have tremendous economic political and military strength. They are capable of intervening in any part of the globe and affect the political stability of the region concerned.

They can also fight proxy wars by sending arms without being directly involved in any regional conflict. They may try to exert direct or indirect influence to cut into influence of regional powers in their areas by deployment of air or naval force, eg. deployment of the American Seventh Fleet in 1971 during the Indo-Pak war.

Change in the foreign policy of a Super Power may have repercussions on global politics, e.g. change in US Presidency from Carter to Reagan may have worldwide ramifications.

Unlike the Super Powers the smaller powers, which are still developing economically, can have only regional influence like the Arab Powers, and depend on the big powers for their own economic development and military equipment.

Since the end of World War II, the United States of America has been dominating the world scene as the single super power, armed with nuclear weapons and operating through organisations like the NATO, CENTO, SEATO, etc. The Soviet Union came into the picture only in the 1960s. But whereas the United States is the biggest military organiser in the

world. The Soviet Union has not shown any intention for military dominance or economic exploitation of any country.

United States and Ethiopia

The United States started dominating the Horn of Africa as far back as 1950, though its involvement started in the pre-war period. In 1927, the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik, granted the United States a concession for utilizing the water flowing out of Lake Tsana, to have in hand a trump card against Anglo-Italian pressure. In 1934, with the impending danger of Italian attack, Ethiopia offered to a joint Anglo-American corporation a large concession in the eastern part of Ethiopia for oil and mineral extraction for 75 years to which Italy protested and ultimately the concession could not be granted.

Towards the close of World War II, the United States sent to Ethiopia a technical mission to explore natural resources for post-war economic development of the country.

So even before the World War II the United States had started trying for a foothold in Ethiopian affairs, trying to coordinate efforts with Britain and France to dominate Ethiopia and ultimately to replace Britain and France as the major determinant and regulator of policies of Ethiopia.

With the rising tide of nationalism in its colonies and with a depleted war-ravaged treasury of Great Britain, now the United States was the only power with sufficient

strength at the end of the war to attempt maintenance of the old colonial system.² It was interested in, firstly, rebuilding West European nations as allies in the struggle against the Soviet Union; secondly, countering social revolutions that would close the door to the United States trade and investment; thirdly, enlarging its own sphere of influence in the areas where earlier its allies had claims; and fourthly, minimizing the influence the Soviet Union might obtain through support of anti-colonial liberation movements.³

The attitude of the United States towards the problem of Eritrea was reflected in its participation in the Four Power Inquiry Commission which made four recommendations: to divide Eritrea between Ethiopia and Sudan, or to return it to Italy, or to grant full independence, or to have unconditional union with Ethiopia.

In 1950 during the debate in the General Assembly on the future of Eritrea, whereas the socialist countries including the Soviet Union, supported the proposal that Eritrea should be granted independence as all people possess a right to self-determination and national independence,⁴ the Western Powers including the United States which were proposing the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia, now promoted a South

2. See The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, vol. 4, p. 903.

3. Ibid.

4. See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, plenary meeting, vol. V, 19 September 15 - December 1950, New York, p. 536.

African proposal to join Eritrea with Ethiopia in a federal Union, which was adopted by the General Assembly.⁵

Whereas the Soviet Union pleaded for giving importance to the Ethiopian claim for a sea outlet as essential for its trade and commerce, import and export of goods, the United States gave only a lukewarm support.

Further, the United States maintained that the boundaries and territories inherited from the colonial period should not be disturbed and it did not support Somalia to raise the issue of Ogaden with Ethiopia.

Kagnew Base

During World War II, the United States army, as a part of the Allied powers, took over a British milit radio station near Asmara and American officials first indicated an interest in establishing a permanent base in the area for communication purposes.⁶ However, although immediately there was no treaty agreement between the two countries on setting up an American base in Ethiopia, after the withdrawal of British forces and military advisers from Ethiopia in 1951, they were replaced by American advisers. In 1953 Ethiopia and the United States concluded agreements and a secret treaty which stipulated the leasing of the Kagnew station in Asmara to the United

5. See Tekie Fessehatzion, "The Eritrean struggle for independence and National Liberation", Horn of Africa, (New Jersey) vol.1, no.2, April-June, 1978, p. 33.

6. See John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (Oxford, 1974), p. 257. Quoted from hearings before the sub-committee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, 91st. Congress, part 8, 1 June 1970, p. 1882.

States and the provision of military assistance to Ethiopia.⁷
The Kagnew station base was named in honour of the Ethiopian
contingent to Korea.

As regards the strategic, military, and geographical
importance of Kagnew base, Spencer points out,

Kagnew is located in the tropics far from
the north and south magnetic poles ...
in a zone which has a limited degree
seasonal variations between sunrise and sunset
reducing the need for numerous frequency
changes. It was, therefore, important to
the worldwide network of US communication
through the Philippines, Ethiopia, Morocco,
Virginia and important as well for the
NATO communication within western Europe
itself when electrical and magnetic dis-
turbances upset communication in these
higher latitudes. It was the biggest of
all US strategic air bases, centre of all
American air and space operations from
the Korean war to the Vietnam war and the
Apollo flights and everything went through
the great air observation and tracking
instruments of 2,500 metre high side.
The USA paid Ethiopia 7 million dollars
per year for the 'lease of Kagnew'.⁸

This amply signifies the geographical strategic and
military importance of the Kagnew base and the resulting
dominance of the United States over the Horn of Africa as a

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7. Ibid., for details also see, J. Bowyer Bell, Horn of Africa: Strategic Magnet in the Seventies (New York, 1977), p. 14. Also see Raman G. Bhavadwaj, The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa, (Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979), p. 47.
 8. See Raman G. Bhavadwaj, "Eritrean Secessionism", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol. 35, no. 1, January-March 1979, pp. 88-89.

super power to dictate policy formulations of the Horn countries, especially that of Ethiopia. Here we see the advent of a Super Power in Ethiopia, replacing the earlier European powers like Italy, Britain and France, in the sense that the United States started dominating the Ethiopian domestic and foreign policies from 1950 onwards as the former colonial powers were doing from mid-17th century up to 1950. The main purpose of the United States was to prevent any other power, especially the Soviet Union, from coming into the picture and influencing policies of the Horn countries, especially that of Ethiopia.

The real intention of US strategists has been emphasised by Richard Lobban in these words:

A complex of secret installations is fenced off 12 sq. miles compound, almost nine miles outside the city of Asmara, with overt activities including spaceships and satellite tracking, relay air-channel control, air-sea rescue, is the free world's most important listening post whose forest of radio aerials and radio-radar-antennas zero in on practically every wireless signal between Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, between the Cape of Good Hope and Russia. 9

So, the American military base at Kagnaw has had far-reaching strategic and military significance for American dominance over Ethiopian foreign and domestic policy formulations

9. See Richard Lobban, Eritrean Liberation Front, California Institute of Technology (California), September 1972, pp. 3-4. quoted from Ranan Bheradwaj, n.8, p. 89.

from 1953 onwards, and in order to counter any Soviet efforts to befriend Ethiopia. America wanted to be the single-most protector and defender of Ethiopia. The Kagnew base cost \$65 million and was originally manned by 1,500 specialist of US armed forces.¹⁰

The Kagnew station became a large, self-contained base with more than 3,000 US military personnel and dependents, acting as a significant and strategic link in the global communications network maintained by the US military strategists.¹¹

In return, Ethiopia received military and economic assistance continuously since 1951. Initially the United States undertook to equip three Ethiopian military divisions of 6,000 men each.

By 1954 Ethiopia secured from the United States a \$40 million mutual assistance grant which included substantial American military and technical aid.¹² In the same year Great Britain implemented the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian agreement and transferred the grazing lands of the Somali inhabited Haud and Reserved Areas to Ethiopia. After 1955 Ethiopia's relations with Britain and America deteriorated because USA and Britain started playing a dual role and supported Greater Somali Movement and in 1959 the United States openly supported

10. See J. Howyer Bell, n.7, p. 39.

11. See n.. 6.

12. See A.A. Castango, "Conflicts in the Horn of Africa", Orbis (Pennsylvania), vol. 4, Spring 1960, no. 2, pp. 206-07.

Britain's pledge of independence to British Somaliland and acceptance of a Somali-British Somaliland Union in case Somalis wanted it. This indicates that America wanted to keep both Somalia and Ethiopia under its influence.

The visit to Addis Ababa by American generals Eddleman, Van Fleet and Decker during the lingering Suez Crisis in 1957 focused attention on American strategic interests in the area. This should be viewed keeping in mind the presence of US army signal corps installation in Asmara, (Eritrea), and the presence of the American military mission in Ethiopia. Up to ¹⁹⁵⁸ ~~1968~~ the US under point Four of the treaty agreement of 1953 granted Ethiopia approximately \$30 million aid.¹³ By 1960 about 150 American technicians were engaged in various Ethiopian developmental projects and training programmes.¹⁴

In 1957 James P. Richards, special representative of the President of the United States, had visited Ethiopia to explain to the Emperor the 'new Middle East Policy' of the United States emphasizing upon the common interest of the people of Middle East and of America in making joint efforts to preserve liberty and freedom against 'international communism'.¹⁵ This indicates American intrigue to dominate Ethiopia under the plea of fighting 'international communism' and its eagerness to involve Ethiopia into Middle East Crisis on the side of America.

13. Ibid., p. 210.

14. Ibid.

15. See Africa Digest (London), vol. 4, no.6, no. May-June 1957, p. 189.

Further, Richards emphasized that in case of necessity US armed forces would not hesitate to help nations of the Middle East and Ethiopia against any armed attack by any country controlled by 'international communism'.¹⁶ This more than clarifies the real intention of America to dominate Ethiopia and Somalia and other countries of the Middle East, in the name of protection, ~~tried to justify his.~~

Ambassador Richards tried to justify his protection theory by stating that United States did not seek any sphere of influence nor any military base but only wanted to ensure the 'independence' and territorial integrity of the countries of the area. This statement indicates that America was not satisfied with the Kagnew base alone and wanted some more privileges for better operating position, because Richards completely ignores the Kagnew base while talking.

The outcome of Richards' visit was that Ethiopia and America agreed to collaborate in fighting communism. The agreement was expressed in the following words: that they would maintain the sovereign equality of all nations to choose their 'government without interference' and for non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, recognition of 'interdependence of nations'.¹⁷ These high sounding phrases really meant two things: that Soviet Union was interfering in the internal affairs of other countries; Secondly, that USA did not support Somali claim on Ogaden or the Eritrean secessionism.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., p. 190.

Consequently, USA agreed to provide more economic and military assistance in addition to those agreed upon earlier, under the new American doctrine.

The confidential talks between Somalia and USA indicate that America wanted to continue its friendship with Ethiopia and not to support Somali even at the displeasure of the Somalis in Ogaden. These talks between the two countries were held in 1960-61. A paper presented by American side during the talks emphasized avoidance of demagogic propaganda by Somalia against neighbours, avoidance of giving any assistance to rebel elements in neighbouring countries, real neutrality and non-alignment, association with major powers only in the interest of Somalia, avoidance of foreign military bases in Somalia, avoidance of propaganda attack by Somalia on US policies, etc.¹⁸

In 1962 the Somali news claimed that between 1954 and 1962 out of \$107.3 million earmarked for African nations to help ^{maintain} their internal security \$67.48 million was given to Ethiopia.¹⁹ This shows the enormous amount of military aid given by the United States to Ethiopia.

In 1964, America sent a specialist counter-insurgency team to instruct the Ethiopians fighting in Ogaden and Eritrea. By this time, American support maintained four Ethiopian

18. See Raymond L. Thurston "The United States, Somalia and the Crisis in the Horn, Horn of Africa (New Jersey, vol. 2, April/June 1978, vol. 2, pp. 12-13.

19. See Africa Digest, vol. 10, no.3, December 1972, p.91.

divisions of a total of 40,000 men, by far the largest military force in sub-Saharan Africa. This reflects the enormous American military presence in Ethiopia.

US military assistance advisory groups (MAAG) were attached to all branches and training institutions of Ethiopian armed forces and counter-insurgency training teams instructed the Ethiopians throughout the 1960s. 2,813 Ethiopian officers attended training courses in the US between 1963 and 1970 and also a US military mapping mission prepared a map of Ethiopia through aerial photography. At the end of the decade Ethiopia was receiving 60 per cent of all US military aid funds for Africa.

20. See, n.6, p. 258 and p. 372.

21. See United States Foreign Policy 1969-70: A Report of the Secretary of State (Washington D.C., Department of State Publications, 8575, March 1970), p. 150, quoted in Markakis, n.7, pp. 257-258. Also see United States Foreign Policy (1971), A Report of the Secretary of State (Washington, 1972), p. 181.

An American writer, Wallerstein says that during 1947-67 USA gave aid worth 243.2 million dollars to including 6.9 million dollars military aid to Liberia, \$ 208.5 million aid including \$ 16.5 million military aid to Liberia, where it had direct interest. He says that Ethiopia got \$ 222.3 million aid including \$ 124.1 million worth military aid where U.S.A. had no direct interest. But we do not agree with Wallerstein's position because if aid figure is one of the parameters to explain a super-power's interest, the aid figure in case of Ethiopia suggests a growing US interest in Ethiopia. Secondly, a unique feature of American military aid during 1946-67 is that Ethiopia was the only African country which got the largest amount of US military aid. For details see Tables 2 and 3, Immanuel Wallerstein, "Africa, The United States and the World Economy: The historical Bases of American Foreign Policy" in Frederick S. Arkhurst, US Policy Toward Africa (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975), pp.23-24.

A testimony before the US Senate Sub-committee shows that Ethiopia has received at least \$131.5 million in grants and \$97.2 million in loans from the United States up to 1969.²²

All this amply shows the massive arms build-up resorted to by the United States and how the United States had a military dominance over Ethiopia from 1953 up to 1970.

The testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-committee published in 1970 further revealed that there had been a secret treaty between the United States and Ethiopia since 1960 for US support to the 40,000-man Ethiopian army.²³

It also became known that since 1960, the USA had sent supersonic jet fighters, bombs, ammunition, etc., to the Ethiopian forces for use against Eritrean insurgents. It had also sent military advisers to train Ethiopians in counter-insurgency and stationed 3,200 American military personnel in Ethiopia to operate a secret electronic intelligence network for monitoring communication within the Soviet Union. This shows that the main intention of the United States was to prevent the Soviet Union from having any friendly relation with Ethiopia.

22. See Hearings before the Sub-committee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, 1 June 1970, p. 1909, quoted in Markakis, n.6, p. 373..

The hearings revealed that since 1953 USA had provided Ethiopia with \$153 million in military assistance. In 1971, the US military aid was to amount to \$12 million - two thirds of the total military aid to allocation to Africa. See, Quarterly Economic Review, (Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia), London, no.1, March 1971, p. 13.

23. Ibid., Also see African Recorder, vol.9, no.3, November 5-18, 1970, p. 2663.

The testimony revealed that by the agreement USA reaffirmed its "continuing interest in the security of Ethiopia and its opposition to any activities threatening the territorial integrity of Ethiopia".

The heavily censored testimony was taken in June 1970 and revealed what Senator Fulbright called "very artful, in depth concealment of what USA was doing in Ethiopia".²⁴ By the agreement of 1960 USA reaffirmed its continuing interest in the security of Ethiopia and its opposition to any activities threatening the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. The United States gave special place to Ethiopia in US - African relations because of the Haile Selassie administration. According to African Recorder, the testimony revealed the pervasive and subversive activities resorted to by the United States, especially its role in the abortive coup of 1960 in Ethiopia.²⁵

Some Major Projects financed by USA

USA helped to finance the initial feasibility study of the giant Finches water and power development scheme and hydroelectric power plant complex on this river in 1970.²⁶

In 1971 USA promised to finance two major agricultural schemes in Ethiopia, one at Ade district of Ethiopia, costing / E 12 million, for building of roads, crop storage facilities, provision of credit and advisory services, supply of fertilizers, other at Shasneene district of Ethiopia costing / E 5.26 million.²⁷

In 1972, United States signed a loan agreement for / E 34.5 million to finance agricultural development schemes in Ethiopia.²⁸

24. Ibid.

25. See, Ibid.

26. See Quarterly Economic Review, n. 23, p. 14.

27. See Quarterly Economic Review, no. 2, 1971, p. 20.

28. See Quarterly Economic Review, no. 3, 1972, p. 21.

All this shows deep American involvement even in economic field of Ethiopia.

In 1973, Ethiopia bought US military equipment to a total value of \$11 million and received \$11.3 million as military aid.²⁹

It was reported by Indian Express, New Delhi, in 1973 that the Ethiopian Government ultimately decided to close the American base at Kangnew in the Asmera province from 1974,³⁰ because America was using the base for its military advantages against the Soviet Union and other Horn countries including Ethiopia.

Role of the Soviet Union.

As already stated, the Soviet Union came into prominence in the Horn of Africa much later than the United States.

After the Italian attack on Ethiopia in 1934-35 when the European powers like Great Britain, France, Italy tacitly acknowledged the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, "only the Soviet Union adopted a definite position of principle on the question of the Italo-Ethiopian war, declaring outright that she stood for the equality and independence of Ethiopia and that she could not support any action that the League of Nations or anyone of the capitalist states might have taken to violate this independence and equality!"³¹ This underlines the point that Soviet Union wanted

29. See Quarterly Economic Review (Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia), no.3, 1974, p. 13.

30. Indian Express, 13 October 1973.

31. See Endre Sik, The History of Black Africa (Budapest, 1972), vol.2, p. 305.

an independent Ethiopia free from the clutches of the colonial powers. Soviet Union was a member of the Four Power Enquiry Commission which was set up to determine the future of Eritrea. As noted, the Commission made four recommendations: to divide Eritrea between Ethiopia and Sudan, or to return it to Italy, or to grant full independence, or to have unconditional union with Ethiopia. The Federation of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Half Moon Society established a 120-bed hospital in Addis Ababa in 1947.³²

In 1950 during the debates in the General Assembly on the future of Eritrea, Am. tianien, the representative of the Soviet Union, emphasized that the Soviet Union has consistently supported the proposal that Eritrea should be granted independence as all people possess a right to self-determination and national independence.

The Soviet delegate pointed out that in considering the fate of Eritrea which was one of the former Italian colonies, the United Nations must take a decision which should satisfy the desire of the Eritrean people for freedom from oppression. He pointed out that the argument used against the proposal that Eritrea should be granted immediate independence were those made in defence of colonial system. As for example, the colonial powers argued that Eritrea was a backward area and was not ready for independence, that an independent

32. Zoltan Gyenge, 'Studies on Developing Countries: Ethiopia on the Road of Non-capitalist Development, No. 90. Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, (Budapest, 1976) p. 46.

Eritrea would not be able to ensure its own economic development and political stability. The Soviet delegate argued that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Eritrea because they along with the colonial powers have perpetrated social and economic exploitation and oppression in Eritrea and if Eritrea would be federated with Ethiopia, the latter with its own shattered economy might not be able to make Eritrea economically self-dependent.

The Soviet proposal provided for immediate independence of Eritrea, for withdrawal of British occupation of troops within three months, and for giving Ethiopia access to the sea through the port of Assab.³³

In 1943, the Soviet Union and Ethiopia exchanged notes regarding exchange of diplomatic relations. In 1956 Ethiopia and the Soviet Union raised their diplomatic missions to embassy level and in 1959 Haile Selassie visited the Soviet Union and signed economic and trade agreements.³⁴

The major outcome of the Emperor's visit was the granting to Ethiopia of a long-term credit of £100,000,000 at a low rate of interest, which would enable the Soviet Union to render economic and technical aid "in the form of survey work, the

33. See General Assembly Official Records, Fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, vol. 1, 19 September - 15 December 1950, New York, p. 536.

34. See Sergius Vakobson, "The Soviet Union and Ethiopia: A Case of Traditional Behaviour", The Review of Politics, vol. 25, no. 3, July 1963, pp. 332-35. Also see, Africa Digest, vol. 7, no. 1, September 1959, p. 13.

supply of equipment and materials and other forms of economic assistance." ³⁵ Under the terms of the agreement USSR was to undertake an extensive geological survey of Ethiopia for minerals and construct gold mining and gold processing plants. ³⁶ There was a reluctance in Ethiopian Administrative circle to use Soviet aid.

By 1962 only a fraction of the 1959 credit had actually been used by Ethiopia i.e., two million dollars in convertible currency for the Emperor's land reform programme. ³⁷ This shows the lack of Soviet involvement in Ethiopian affairs.

In the meanwhile, Ethiopia was assisted by the Soviet Union in the building of an oil refinery at Assab and the technical college at Bahar Dar.

Haile Selassie's Visit to Soviet Union in 1967 and 1970

Emperor Haile Selassie again visited Soviet Union in 1967. Speaking at a reception in the Kremlin, on 27 February, Emperor said:

"I want to emphasize my desire for the broadest possible fruitful cooperation between our two countries. The assistance ³⁸ the USSR has given Ethiopia in raising living standards."

The Emperor referred to the oil refinery in Assab, the technical college at Bahar Dar and the Soviet hospital in Addis Ababa as worthy examples of cooperation.

35. See Vakobson, n.34, p. 335.

36. See Africa Digest, vol.7, no.6, June 1960, p. 189.

37. See n. 35.24

38. See New Times, no. 21, 15 March 1967, p. 2.

The joint communique after the talks stated that a delegation of Soviet experts would visit Ethiopia to explore opportunities for extending trade and other forms of economic cooperation. No reference was made in the communique to the unutilised economic aid given in 1959.

Emperor Haile Selassie again visited Soviet Union in 1970. He recalled the Soviet role in helping Ethiopia against Italian aggression in the League of Nations in 1935-36." At that time, the imperialists powers wanted to destroy Ethiopia's freedom, but the Soviet Union, represented in the League of Nations by Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov, condemned them.³⁹ In those days the Soviet Union rescued Ethiopia in the League of Nations in defence of its independence, and demanded action against the aggressor. It finally persuaded the League to adopt a decision on economic sanctions against fascist Italy. But Britain and France, who were then trying to persuade Mussolini into agreeing to partitioning Ethiopia, prevented the sanctions from being implemented and thus helped the Italians to conquer the country.

No new agreement was signed during emperor's visit in 1970. But it is understood that the visit was utilised to explain to Soviet leaders the Ethiopian position on Somalia raised border conflict because Soviet Union was getting closer to Somalia and the emperor wanted an assurance from Soviet

39. See New Times, no. 23, 9 June, 1970, p. 16.

Union for dissuading Somalia from launching any military attack on Ethiopia. According to available records, there was no armed conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia during the period of best relation between Somalia and Soviet Union.

In spite of massive economic aid worth 240 million dollars given by United States for various projects like Fincha irrigation project and hydro electric power plant, major agricultural schemes along with credit facilities for supply of fertiliser, in Ada and Shashanene districts of Ethiopia and for infrastructural development in Ethiopia no real development took place in Ethiopia and it is strange that inspite of the massive economic aid Ethiopia remained backward and poor.

Thus during the 1954-73 period, whereas the Soviet Union gave Ethiopia economic aid worth 13 million US dollars, the United States gave 249 million US dollars. As regards military aid, the total for the United States was 200 million US dollars, while the Soviet contribution was negligible.⁴⁰

This shows that during the 1954-73 period, both military and economic aid given by the United States to Ethiopia was far more than that given by the Soviet Union. No wonder that the dominating influence was that of the United States.

4D See Table 7.5 in the Military Balance 1973-74 (London). The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1973), quoted in Chinese and Soviet Aid in Africa, ed. Warren Hein Stein, (Praeger Publication) New York, Washington, 1975), pp. 193-94.
Western powers like USA, Britain, West Germany, gave military aid to Ethiopia in million dollars worth 1.7 in 1952, 3.0 in 1953, 3.0 in 1954, 3.0 in 1956, 6.4 in 1957,

Secondly, whereas the Soviet Union did not exert any pressure on Ethiopia regarding latter's relations with other countries, the United States - Ethiopia treaty agreement of 1960 implicitly provided that Ethiopia should not give any military facility to any foreign country except the United States, in Ethiopia.^{4‡}

CONCLUSION

The main issue of discussion in this chapter relates to the role of the United States and Soviet Union in Ethiopia during 1950-73. Our discussion shows that these powers came into the arena of Ethiopian affairs to influence policy matters, thus replacing the former colonial powers like Italy, Britain and France.

As an ally to the former colonial powers, and with the avowed object of 'containing communism' America intruded into Ethiopia in the 1950s to secure a military foothold in the Kagneb base. It gave a large amount of military and economic aid to Ethiopia, as against very limited economic aid given by the Soviet Union.

4D. (conté..) 7.8 in 1958, 6.9 in 1959, 9.3 in 1960, 14.5 in 1961, 14.9 in 1962, 12.0 in 1963, 10.5 in 1964, 12.1 in 1965, 12.5 in 1966, 15.0 in 1967, 9.8 in 1968. See SIPRI Year book of World Armaments and Disarmament 1969/70. (Sweden), pp. 284-85. This shows the enormous amount of grants given by the Western powers to Ethiopia from 1952 onwards.

4‡. Ibid.

We have also seen that the United States secretly concluded treaty agreements in 1960 with Ethiopia guaranteeing it special protection against foreign attack. The existence of the treaty came in to limelight only in 1970.

The attitude of the United States towards the Ogaden and Eritrean problems during the 1950-73 period was favourable towards Ethiopia in the sense that it all along maintained that the boundaries and territories inherited from the colonial period should not be disturbed. Thus, the United States did not support Somalia to raise any dispute with Ethiopia on the Ogaden issue nor did it support the Eritrean secessionists which has been revealed from the fact that in the secret understanding which United States had with Somalia, Somalia pledged not to have any propaganda against the territories of its neighbours. But Somalia attacked Kenya and Ethiopia in 1963-64 inspite of Somali assurance to United States. US position on Somalia-Ethiopia border conflict had a ^{remarkable} ~~vulnerable~~ change after the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. The US started supporting Somalia on Ogaden and Eritrean issues. Soviet role in Ethiopia during the 1950-73 period was very negligible. America supported the proposal of creation of a federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea disregarding the plea of socialist countries like Soviet Union who supported the proposal calling for independence of Eritrea.

The Soviet Union supported independence for Ethiopia in the League of Nations in 1934-35 when Ethiopia was attacked by

Italy. The colonial powers like Britain, France tacitly acknowledged Italian occupation of Ethiopia. When Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia visited Soviet Union in 1959, 1967, he concluded agreements providing for Soviet economic aid and expert knowledge in irrigation projects, oil and mineral survey schemes, but a small amount of aid was actually used by Ethiopia.

In this chapter we have noticed a dramatic change in the attitude of two powers. The Soviet Union supported independence of Eritrea and America supported federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea during Haile Selassie regime. In the post-revolutionary period, we find that the roles were reversed. Now, Soviet Union supports Eritrean—Ethiopian federation with autonomy while America indirectly supports the independence of Eritrea through the Arabs.

Chapter III

1974 ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND CHANGE IN
SUPER POWER ATTITUDE TO ERITREAN PROBLEM

Chapter III

1974 ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND CHANGE IN SUPER POWER ATTITUDE TO ENITREAL. PROBLEM

The 1974 February Revolution opened a new chapter in the history of Ethiopia. Therefore, we have taken 1974 as the starting year of our dissertation.

The revolution brought to an end the feudal and oppressive system which was being headed by nobility and supported by western powers particularly America. The revolution introduced new measures and began a process of change in internal as well as external policies. "The immediate economic gains include land reforms, nationalization of urban property, banks, insurance, industrial units, transport and power, organization of rural and urban people in self-administering units, laying our economic policy and setting up of a provisional mass organization, launching of the national work campaign, development through cooperatives."¹

The new government's aims were socialism, non-alignment and a crusade against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The programme included completion of a national democratic revolution under the Provisional Military Administrative Council.² The main points of the programme are as follows:

1. See Vijay Gupta, "The Ethiopian Revolution's Causes and Results", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol. 34, no. 2, April-June 1978, p. 166.
2. See "Support the Just Cause of the Ethiopian People: A Message from the Broad Masses of Ethiopia to the Progressive and Democratic Forces of the World and all Peace-loving Countries", (Berhanehela Selam Printing Press), pp. 9-10.

1. To completely abolish feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism from Ethiopia and with the united effort of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces, to build a new Ethiopia by laying a stronger foundation for the transition to Socialism.
2. Towards this end, under the leadership of the working class, on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance and in collaboration with the petty-bourgeois and other anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces, to establish a people's democratic republic in which the freedom, equality, unity and prosperity of the Ethiopian people is ensured, in which self-government at different level is exercised and which allows for the unconditional exercise of human and democratic rights. 3

Some of the specific points of the Programme emphasize recognition of "the equality and unity of Ethiopia's nationalities in accordance with the spirit of socialism and to prepare them for self-determination by encouraging them to forge a common front against their enemies"⁴, and to guide Ethiopia's foreign policy in accordance with the principles of non-alignment"⁵ and "to create a united front with all progressive forces dedicated to the struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism".⁶

3. Ibid., p. 9.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 10.

6. Ibid.

This announcement very much angered the United States which wanted that Ethiopia should remain under its sphere of influence. But the new Ethiopian government resolved to fight against imperialist, racist, neo-colonialist forces, to follow a socialist path of development, to dismantle foreign military bases from Ethiopia, and to follow a non-aligned foreign policy. The attitude of the United States gradually hardened as Ethiopia refused to adopt a pro-Western stance like the former Haile Selassie regime in its internal and foreign policy orientation.

The attitude of United States towards the Ogaden war of 1977 and its manoeuvring along with Arab States and Somalia against Ethiopia will be discussed in the next chapter.

In this chapter, we shall discuss how the United States, which was earlier supporting the Ethiopian regime in crushing the Eritrean secessionist movement, now manoeuvred and thus indirectly supported the Eritrean secessionists and instigated Somalia and other Arab countries against the Ethiopian Socialist government. We will also discuss how the Soviet Union changed its position from supporting the Eritrean self-determination to autonomy within Ethiopia.

We have already traced the origin of the Eritrean problem and tried to show that Eritree is a part of Ethiopia and that the secessionist movement is being conducted by a minority in connivance with Arab powers and Somalia.

It is necessary to stress here that the national minorities in Ethiopia were severely oppressed and their rights trodden under foot by the Haile Selassie regime. Therefore, until the overthrow of Haile Selassie, the Eritrean movement had a popular and democratic content. But once the Ethiopian peoples' revolution took place, the situation changed radically. What was once a progressive movement now exhibited a reactionary tendency. In the concrete field of unity established by the oppressed Ethiopian masses to destroy the old system of exploitation and domination and to create jointly a society free from exploitation, oppression and domination, a society of common welfare, economic advancement, peace and solidarity, where class unity prevails, a divisive and secessionist movement is very harmful. It has also to be stressed that any effort made to prevent the unity of exploited classes in their future exercise of power helps the enemies of these same classes, i.e., the imperialists and the neo-colonialists.

It was observed that after the overthrow of Haile Selassie, the traditional rationale for US military aid to Ethiopia disappeared since Ethiopia's "moderate leadership" in African affairs could not be expected.⁷ This may imply that the United States was annoyed because Ethiopia adopted a revolutionary approach and refused to accept US approach in foreign and domestic policy matters.

7. Richard Bissell, "Reflections on the Quarter", Orbis (New York), vol.21, no.4, winter 1978, p. 658.

US Role in Eritrea

On 21 February 1975, it was reported that Ethiopia's military government had requested the United States to supply \$30 million worth of arms and ammunition to fight secessionist guerrillas in Eritrea and that the United States had accepted the request.⁸ This may imply that the United States seemed to be very eager to regain the influence it had during the Haille Selassie regime, when by the secret treaty agreement it had a special place in US-Ethiopian relations and enjoyed military base facilities at Kagnaw.

It was further reported that heavy fighting had broken out in several areas of Eritrea in February 1975 as government troops, using American-built jets, attacked guerrilla strongholds along the roads leading to the provincial capital of Asmara.⁹ This shows that gradually American sources were giving more and more coverage to the Eritrean secessionist movement which they had never done during the Haille Selassie regime. Of course, the United States seemed to be in a dilemma whether to support the new socialist regime or switch over to encourage Eritrean secessionist movement.

It was reported that a guerrilla attack on an American telecommunication base near Asmara led to the announcement in September 1975 by head of Ethiopian government General Tafari Bante to order its closure.¹⁰ This gave a blow to

8. Africa Recorder, vol. 14, no. 6, 12-25 March, 1975, p. 3933.

9. Guardian, 22 February 1975.

10. Guardian, 15 September 1975.

military facilities which the USA was enjoying in Ethiopia and its plans for future dominance over Ethiopia.

It was reported that the abduction of two American servicemen from the Kagnaw (Asmara) Communication Centre by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was a calculated move to compel Washington to change its policy of support for Ethiopia.¹² This might have very much embarrassed the United States which wanted to dominate both the new Ethiopian government and also the Eritrean secessionists.

The US policy seemed to be vacillating in the sense that it was not able to back the military rulers partly because they were leaning to the "left", and partly because such backing would have "alienated it from the Arab states" which were openly favouring the secessionists.¹³ Further, as the above reports show, the United States could not turn its back on the military government either, as it feared that such a move would make them look for "assistance from the Soviet Union" and at the same time, the US was "worried" about Ethiopia's security and crippling economy in the face of secessionist problem.¹⁴ This shows the double-dealing

11. Omitted in the text.

12. See Colin Legum, "New Complications in Ethiopia", Amrit Bazar Patrika (Calcutta), 24 September 1975.

13. Times of India (Delhi), 18 September 1975. Also see Edward Staits, The Horn of Africa, Royal United Services Institute and Brassey's Defence Year Book 1978/79, (London 1988), p. 132.

14. Ibid.

policy of the United States to keep both Ethiopia and the Eritrean secessionists under its dominance, as America was afraid of a possible Soviet effort to persuade the Marxist factions in both the Ethiopian government and the ELF to work out a peaceful compromise solution of the Eritrean problem.

On 21 April 1976, the Ethiopian government issued a detailed political programme heralding a People's Democratic Republic and the spreading of socialist philosophy.¹⁵

The programme on national democratic revolution included regional autonomy for various nationalities, particularly for Eritreans. It promised economic and social development of all regions of Ethiopia including Eritrea.

In a May Day speech Ethiopian Brigadier-General stated that the right of each nationality to exercise regional autonomy by using its own language and electing its own local administrators was applicable to all parts of Ethiopia and was the basis for the solution to the problem in Eritrea.¹⁶ This once again reiterated the sincerity of the Ethiopian government to seek a solution of the Eritrean problem.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of Ethiopia announced a nine-point peace programme on

15. African Recorder, vol. 15, no. 11, 20 May- 2 June 1976, p. 4255.

16. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 22, 27 August 1976, p. 27913.

16 May 1976 and invited the separatist forces to a dialogue to solve the Eritrean problem peacefully and democratically according to the programme of the National Democratic
17
Revolution.

Nine-Point Peace Programme

The Nine-Point Peace Programme announced by the PMAC of Ethiopia in May 1976 reads:

1. The anomalies which had existed before will be done away with and the people of the Eritrean Administrative Region will, in a new spirit and in cooperation and collaboration with the rest of the Ethiopian people, have full participation in the political, economic and social life of the country. They will in particular play their full role in the struggle to establish the People's Democratic Republic in accordance with the Programme of the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution.
2. The Programme of the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution has affirmed that the right of self-determination of nationalities can be guaranteed through regional autonomy which takes due account of objective realities prevailing in Ethiopia, her surroundings and in the world at large. To translate this into deeds, the government will study each of the regions of the country, the history and interactions of the nationalities inhabiting them, their geographic positions, economic structures and their

17. See, n.2, p. 13.

suitability for development and administration. After taking these into consideration, the government will at an appropriate time present to the people the format of the regions that can exist in the future. The entire Ethiopian people will then democratically discuss the issue at various levels and decide upon it themselves.

3. Having realised the difficulties existing in the Administrative Region of Eritrea and the urgency of overcoming them, and in order to apply in practice the right of self-determination of nationalities on a priority basis, the Provisional Military Government is prepared to discuss and exchange views with the progressive groups and organisations in Eritrea which are not in collusion with feudalists, reactionary forces and imperialists.
 4. The government will give full support to progressives in the Eritrean Administrative Region who will, in collaboration with Progressives in the rest of Ethiopia and on the basis of the Programme of the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution, endeavour to arouse, organise and lead the working masses of the region in the struggle against the three enemies of the Ethiopian people - feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and imperialism - and thereby promote the unity of the oppressed classes of Ethiopia.
 5. The Government will give all necessary assistance to those Ethiopians who, because of the long lack of peace in the
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the Eritrean Administrative Region, have been in exile in neighbouring countries and in far-off alien lands so that they may, as of today, return to their own country.

6. The Government will make a special effort in rehabilitating those Ethiopians who might have lost their property because of the adverse conditions that had existed. All those who have been dislocated from jobs, and education as a result of the existing problem will be enabled to avail themselves of the employment and educational opportunities which Ethiopia can offer in any of the regions.
7. People who have been imprisoned as a result of the existing problem will be released. The cases of those who have been sentenced to life imprisonment or death will be carefully examined and reviewed as soon as peaceful conditions are restored and, on the basis of their offences, they will either receive reduced prison terms or be altogether released.
8. The state of emergency will be lifted as soon as the major decisions begin to be implemented and peace is guaranteed in the Eritrean Administrative Region.
9. A Special Commission entrusted with the task of ensuring the implementation of decisions 5 to 7 above will be established by proclamation. 18

Thus, the Nine-Point Peace Programme announced by the Ethiopian Government enunciated wide-ranging reform

18. Ibid., pp. 14-16.

programmes for a peaceful and constructive solution of the Eritrean problem and for leading to socio-economic development of Eritrea. Soviet Union agreed to the proposal of giving regional autonomy to Eritrea within the federation of Ethiopia because it met its requirement in the light of the above Nine-Point Peace Programme. Later, the PMAC established a special commission to implement Nine Point Programme but the separatist elements and the hostile neighbouring forces sabotaged the initiative when they feared restoration of stability.¹⁹ This shows that in spite of efforts by the PMAC the secessionists were not concerned with the freedom, well-being and equality of Eritreans but were helping the interests of imperialists and reactionary Arab regimes.²⁰ This might have made the United States happy as it was displeased with the non-aligned and socialist policies of the Ethiopian government.

The Ethiopian socialist government has repeatedly appealed to all the Eritrean secessionist groups, not to be swayed by the conservative and traditionalist neighbours who in ~~reality~~ wanted to dominate them but to work side by side with other Ethiopians to establish a fair, popular and democratic society and to defend the legitimate rights of all the workers and peasants of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Ethiopia asked its peasants to come forward and defend their brothers in Eritrea. A peasants march was planned to win over the

19. Ibid., p. 13.

20. Ibid.

Eritreans by persuasion and if necessary arms. The March was withdrawn lest it is misunderstood and later as demonstration of massive force.

The American Government took credit for the withdrawal of the march. The western sources alleged that "the officially inspired peasants march on Eritrea" was a failure and the United Press International reported that Washington had privately warned Ethiopia that a "holy war" against "Muslim rebels" of Eritrea could "force a change in the American policy of supplying arms to the Government."²¹ This threat implies open American support to encourage Eritrean secessionism if Ethiopia did not follow policies favourable to US interests.

The moot point is that Ethiopia had obtained specific assurances from previous US government that self-determination should not apply to Ethiopian secessionists. No doubt at that time the Ethiopian regime was at bad terms with USA. The US foreign policy on Ethiopia was made clear by William Schauffle, US Assistant Secretary to African Affairs, to the Senate Sub-committee on African Affairs in August 1976 in these words: "We are well aware that our military aid is a two-edged sword and that it is a major support if the present government with whose actions we do not always agree, particularly in the field of human rights."²²

21. Indian Express (Delhi), 22 May 1976.

22. Indian Express, 21 December 1976.

This statement clearly shows the opportunist policy of the United States which would stop aid to Ethiopia under this excuse. In this context, the Ethiopian President referring to Western powers rightly said: "The same countries did not only shamelessly keep silent in the face of the immense violation of human rights which were prevalent under the defunct feudal regime, but also actively encouraged and supported them."²³

Sudanese Role

President Nemeiry of Sudan accused Ethiopia on 30 January, 1977 of "massacring innocent people" and using the wrong methods in trying to solve the Eritrean problem. In reply a spokesman of the Ethiopian Government accused Sudan on 7 February of "flagrant violation of the basic principles of the United Nations and of the OAU" by supporting secessionist movements in Eritrea, saying that a peaceful solution to the problem would have been "within easy reach" had it not been for the "uninterrupted support" which the secessionists had been receiving "from reactionary rulers of the Sudan and others in the Red Sea region."²⁴

Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Ethiopian Head of State who replaced Tafari Benti accused on 6 April "neighbouring reactionary Arab leaders," especially President Nemeiry, of supporting and arming the Eritrean Popular Revolutionary Party, the Ethiopian Democratic Union and the Eritrean

23. See Louis Khepoort, "There's Hope For Ethiopia", Horn of Africa (New Jersey), vol.2, no.1, January-March 1979, p. 3.

24. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives, vol.21, 1 July, 1977, p. 28422.

Liberation Front of intending "to force us to choose between our revolution and Eritrea".²⁵ This highlights Sudanese role in complicating the Eritrean problems.

It was reported in April 1977 that three western journalists, including the US Information Service and Ministry Advisory Group, were connected with the secessionists' capture of an important government stronghold. So, they were expelled from Ethiopia on charges of false and provocative reporting about the development in Eritrean secessionist movement²⁶ which interfered in the internal affairs of Ethiopia and obstructed a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem.

One of the main reasons why the Ethiopian socialist government came closer to the Soviet Union was because America failed to help the Central government in Ethiopia to overcome the Eritrean secessionists - as it was doing during the Haile Selassie regime.

Even under the Haile Selassie regime, the relations between the United States and Ethiopia were not totally cordial, especially when it was disclosed in 1970 that the two countries had concluded in 1960 a secret treaty for mutual military assistance. In 1974, after the Ethiopian Revolution, the discord between the United States and Ethiopia started becoming more and more acute because:

25. Ibid.

27. See The Times (London), 26 April 1977.

- 1) the USA gave a lukewarm support to Ethiopia in facing the Eritrean secessionist problem;
- 2) USA rather tried to instigate the Eritrean secessionists to fight against the Ethiopian revolutionary government through propaganda about alleged suppression of Eritrean secessionists in a ruthless manner;
- 3) as discussed in chapter 4, the United States started instigating Somalia to attack the Ogaden province of Ethiopia;
- 4) the USA tried to alienate Ethiopia from the Arab countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc, and persuade them to support Somalia against Ethiopia;
- 5) the USA tried to weaken the Ethiopian revolutionary government by compelling it to face both the problems of Ogaden and Eritrea in an almost war-like situation and threatened to stop all aid on the plea of violation of human rights as it was displeased with the socialist policies of the Ethiopian government, especially the withdrawal of facilities at Kagnaw military base by the new regime of 1974.

The Chairman of Ethiopian PMAD, Col. Mengistu has several times declared categorically that Eritreans would be granted full rights to national self-determination within a united Ethiopia. But this proposal was rejected at the prodding of Sudan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia who were using the separatist movement as an instrument to dismember, divide and weaken Ethiopia in exchange for military and economic help from the United States. ²⁷ All this shows the ulterior motive of the United States to dominate Ethiopia and keep the solution of Eritrean problem pending, so that its own interest will be served by sending arms to the Eritrean secessionists.

Soviet Role in Eritrea

An Ethiopian State delegation led by Moges Wolde Mikael, Chairman of the Committee of the PMAC of Ethiopia visited Moscow in July 1976.

Describing Soviet-Ethiopian relations in a speech at the reception in honour of the Ethiopian delegation, Soviet foreign Minister said that the Soviet Union stands for the development of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation with this African country. "Now that revolutionary transformations and progressive socio-economic changes are taking place in Ethiopia, our peoples will have greater opportunity to impart a new and richer meaning to Soviet-Ethiopian cooperation in the political, cultural and other spheres."²⁸

In the face of an imminent threat by USA to suspend military aid to Ethiopia and (due to existence of) a fierce Eritrean secessionist movement, a new and closer relationship between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union was affirmed during a visit by Lieutenant-General Mengistu to Moscow in May 1977.

On this occasion President Podgorny emphasised as to why the Soviet Union wants peace in the Horn area and said that Ethiopia and the Soviet Union were "natural allies" whose links should be strengthened, and he added: "As for the Red Sea, recent events show that the imperialists would

28. See New Times, no.30, July 1976, p. 16.

like to establish their control over this region with the help of certain Arab countries, in the first place Saudi Arabia, and in violation of the legitimate right of the other states and people of this region and to the detriment of free international navigation.²⁹"

In a joint communique, issued at the end of the visit no reference was made to any military agreement, but the Soviet side expressed, "solidarity with the efforts of the people and leadership of Ethiopia in defending revolutionary gains."³⁰

On 8 June, 1977 the three Eritrean Liberation movements: Eritrean Liberation Front - Revolutionary Council, Eritrean Liberation Front - Popular Liberation Forces, Eritrean Popular Liberation Front, had rejected any political solution^{other} than total independence of Eritrea, and in particular they rejected a Soviet proposal for a federation between Eritrea and the rest of Ethiopia which would have involved "recognition of a distinctive Eritrean status".³¹ This underlies the Soviet effort for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem.

According to a report from Beirut on 2 September 1977, under an agreement concluded in March 1977, Soviet Union had

29. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 23, (July 1977, p. 28423.

30. Ibid.

31. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 23, 28 October 1977, p. 28634.

undertaken to supply Ethiopia with 48 MIG-21 fighters, almost 200 modern T-54 and T-55 tanks and numbers of SAM-3 and SAM-7 missiles, worth \$330,000, with payment on easy terms. ³²

According to a (Jairo) Middle East News Agency report of 3 September, 1977 a military agreement concluded in July 1977 between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union provided for the supply of aircraft, tanks, and equipment, as well as 3,000 Soviet and Cuban experts. ³³

It was reported on 21 September that 48 MIG-21 fighters had been delivered to Ethiopia by Soviet Union and that Soviet Union had also landed 300 tanks and 28 lorries with rocket launchers with technical experts. ³⁴

In October 1977 the Soviet ambassador to Ethiopia, assured the Ethiopian government in the face of American threat to suspend military aid on the excuse of human rights, due to growing Eritrean Liberation Movement, due to possible Somalian attack on Ethiopian Ogaden region, that the Soviet Union would "remain on the Ethiopian side in the defence of its revolution and unity". ³⁵

On 18 January 1978, the Ethiopian Deputy Foreign Minister emphasised that Ethiopia would remain non-aligned and although there were no military personnel from the Soviet Union or Cuba in Ethiopia, his country was "getting adequate assistance from our friends, enough to defend our territory and our revolution". This argument did reflect the western

32. Ibid., p. 28635.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. See Aeesing's Contemporary Archives, vol.24, 6 January 1978, p. 28761.

allegation that Ethiopia was tilting towards Soviet Union but it did not provide the truth. Soviets and Cubans did have their men in Ethiopia. So, the assistance by Soviet Union to Ethiopia has to be understood in the light of defeat of Ethiopia by Somalia in 1977 Ogaden war, fierce fighting between Ethiopian forces, and Eritrean secessionists, internal political difficulties in Ethiopia, famine etc.

In January 1978, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front changed that Soviet MIG fighter bombers and destroyers were bombing rebel forces in the port of Massawa. The Soviet news agency Tass and a member of Ethiopia's ruling Military Council denied these charges. They said that the Soviet warships had not helped in the defence of the Eritrean port of Massawa.³⁶

Western sources had alleged that by February 1978 the number of Cuban soldiers in Ethiopia increased from 1,000 to 10,000 and in March 1978 it increased up to 17,000 troops to fight the secessionists in Eritrea and bomb their positions. Although the western sources could not give any conclusive and categorical evidence to support their claim but the dispute was more on the number of troops

36. National Herald, 20 January 1978, Also see The Times, 2 February 1978.

37. Roger W. Fontaine, "Cuban Strategy in Africa: The Long Road of Ambition", Strategic Review, vol.6, no.3, Summer 1978, p. 23. Western sources gave conflicting reports about the exact number of Cuban troops in Ethiopia. The Times Correspondent David Spanier (8 March 1978) reported their number to be more than 10,000 troops. (see The Times, 8 March 1978). G.K. Reddy put the number at not less than 12,000 (see The Hindu (Madras), 11 March 1978). US State Department estimates put it at 15,000 troops in April, (see Sunday Standard (New Delhi), 9 July 1978).

The Cuban Foreign Minister Rodriguez admitting ^{their} ~~that~~ help to Ethiopia stated: "we helped the Eritreans in their fight for self-determination from the time of Haile Selassie onward. We feel that there has to be some political solution to Eritrean problem and there have got to be talks between the Eritreans and the central governments". ³⁸ The Soviet and Cuban help to Ethiopia shows that they were consistent in their policy, unlike the USA which was supporting Haile Selassie regime (against Eritrean secessionism, but later on shifted its help to the Eritrean secessionist movement. Further the Cubans were interested in a peaceful solution of the problem. The Soviets had certainly changed their positions on the question of Eritrea while during Eritrea's regime they were for self-determination leading to independence now they emphasized autonomy within Ethiopia.

On 15 March 1978, Pravda wrote justifying the support of Communist countries to the Ethiopian regime on Eritrea. This article was interpreted by Western sources to mean that decisions had been taken to move the Cubans and Soviet troops

37. (contd..) US estimates put it at 17,000 to 18,000 in April 1978 as known through another source (see Christian Science Monitor, 25 April 1978, quoted in Middle East Review, (New York), vol. 10, no. 4, Summer 1978). The US sources tried to use the presence of Cuban troops in Ethiopia for propaganda against Cuba by giving news with inflated number of Cuban troops in Ethiopia.

38. Fontaine, n. , as quoted from Observer, 26 February 1978. Also see Keesing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 24, 26 May, 1978, p. 28994.

to the Eritrean Front.³⁹

Western sources also reported in March 1978 that the Soviets had succeeded in the formation of a joint political command between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in Khartoum on 18 March after a long discussion. But it was also mentioned that the EPLF is not tied to Moscow or any other communist party.⁴⁰ And that the joint front was formed due to the pressure exerted by the Soviet and Cuban presence in Ethiopia on the Eritrean movements.⁴¹ So Western sources gave contradictory reports about Soviet and Cuban influence on the formation of joint political command between the two factions of Eritrean secessionists. Dr. Owen, the British Foreign

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39. Charles Harrison, "Cuban Forces Likely to Intervene in war against Eritrean", The Times, 17 March 1978. Also see The Times, 4 April 1978, 27 April 1978. The thrust of the Pravda commentary was that Eritreans were directed by international imperialists and the Arab reactionaries. It referred to the external assistance to Eritreans as "interference" against the socialist revolution in Ethiopia and said that the enemies were trying to "weaken Ethiopia ... to liquidate the possibility of its access to sea" (see Times of India, 24 May 1978). The article made it clear that the USSR would support the Ethiopian forces against "rebels" in Eritrea because western and Arab support for the secessionists was aimed at weakening Ethiopia and depriving of it of its outlets to the Red Sea and because the secessionists were "objectively helping the realization of imperialist designs", See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 24, 26 May 1978, p. 28994.
40. Ramen G. Bhardwaj, The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa (Sterling, 1979) p. 122.
41. Africa Confidential, vol. 19, no. 7, 31 March 1978.

Secretary protested in April 1978 that Soviet Union and Cuba should not intervene in Eritrea, Soviets tried to clear their positions by sending a Note to British Foreign Office. The Note which set out the Soviet position and was delivered to the British Foreign Office, claimed that Dr Owen had grossly distorted the policy of the Soviet Union in Africa.⁴²

The Note clarified that "the USSR does not seek any advantages or privileges for itself in Africa".⁴³ Its policy in Africa or elsewhere was "aimed at building friendly relations on the basis of respect for the principle of the inviolability of frontiers, sovereign equality, territorial integrity of states and non-interference in each other's internal affairs."⁴⁵

The Soviet position given in this Note reflected the Soviet Union's position held since the overthrow of haile Sallessie ^{regime,} regional position that the Eritrean secessionist problem and the Ogaden issue could be solved peacefully through discussion and mutual negotiation and it has not instigated Somalia to attack Ethiopia. This is evident from

42. The Times, 7 April 1978.

43. Ibid.

45. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, n.35, p. 28995. On April 7 the Cuban Foreign Ministry stated that Dr Owen had no right to meddle in affairs which should only be discussed by the parties concerned and that the internal situation in Ethiopia, including the Eritrean problem was strictly a matter for the Ethiopian Government and people. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, n.35, p. 28995.

the endeavour for the Aden meeting which was held with the initiative of Soviet Union and Cuba to find peaceful solution to the problems between Ethiopia and Somalia as will be discussed in Chapter 4. Even the communique issued after the Moscow visit of Mengistu, The Ethiopian Chairman of P.M.A.C.,⁴⁶ in November 1978 highlights this point.

The Soviets and Cubans regarded Somalia as aggressor in the case of Uganda but in the case of Eritrea they held that it was an internal matter and ~~required~~^{required} an internal solution. They refused to commit their troops and men to fight the secessionists. But the western sources continued to spread reports that Cuban piloted planes and Ethiopian government troops were launching heavy attacks against guerrilla positions in Ethiopia's Eritrea province.⁴⁷

46. See Punapriya Dasgupta, "Troubled Eritrea Comes into Force", Indian Express (Delhi), 8 May 1978. See Fontaine n.33, p. 25.
After the visit of Col. Mengistu to Moscow in November 1978 the Communique stated inter alia that both sides had "held a comprehensive and constructive exchange of views on questions of further strengthening and developing the relations of friendship and all-round cooperation between the Soviet Union and Socialist Ethiopia as well as on certain typical international problems of mutual interest". In connection with the latter point both countries "re-affirmed" the necessity for a political settlement in the conflicts in the Horn of Africa "on the basis of renunciation of territorial claims respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 25, 2 February 1979, p. 29435.

47. International Herald Tribune, 27 April 1978.

The Cuban President Castro, delivering a speech in honour of the visiting Ethiopian President Mengistu to Havana, clarified Cuba's position. He said that as Ethiopia needs internal peace, Cuba equally supports a peaceful and just solution based on Leninist principles to the national question, within the framework of an Ethiopian revolutionary state, that would safeguard the inalienable rights to unity, integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in its internal affairs.⁴⁸ This emphasizes the Cuban stand for a peaceful solution to the Eritrean problem.

Further, though it has been emphasized that Cuban troops were there in Ethiopia and might be present in Eritrea also, still there were no definite reports of their fighting Eritreans. The Cubans regard the Eritreans question as basically a matter of constitutional relations to be settled between the Ethiopians and Eritreans.

The Communique issued after the Cuban visit of Mengistu in April 1978 advocates peaceful solution of the Eritrean secessionist problem and Ethiopia-Somalia dispute. No doubt, Cuba assisted the leftist and democratic elements of the Eritreans in the past against the oppressive and feudal

48. See Granma (Havana), year 13, No. 19, 7 May 1978, for Cuban-Ethiopian Joint Communique, which condemned "the sinister activities of imperialism and its reactionary allies in the region aimed at promoting wars among the African people so as to keep the countries of that region under their control and at the services of their exploiter interests. In their pursuit of their further aggressive designs, they coordinate their forces against the Ethiopian Revolution, they encourage secessionism, territorial claims on alleged ethnic and religious grounds in an attempt to achieve their expansionist ambitions and thereby revise the existing borders. See page 8.

haile Selassie regime, but the rise of the radical Mengistu regime, in Addis Ababa and the increasing support given to the Eritreans by the pro-west Arabs to disrupt Ethiopian revolution and to disturb the Nine-Point Peace Declaration of the Ethiopian Radical Government for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem have led to a change in the Cuban and Soviet viewpoint. Thus, Castro's anxiety to see Ethiopia's territorial integrity kept intact may be taken as an indication that he is in favour of Eritrean autonomy within the Ethiopian state.

Havana and Moscow both have been pressing Mengistu to negotiate with the Eritreans. The communique in Moscow after Col. Mengistu's visit had condemned the efforts of Arab and Western powers at kindling local wars and establishment of their control in the Red Sea region and reiterated Soviet hopes of a progressive transformation in that region.⁴⁹

Western sources have lamented that the whole concept of Western democracy was tainted when the United States signed defence agreements with the oppressive Ethiopian regime to establish the Kagnew station at Massawa, near Eritrea, and

49. See n. 46, 47. In this context stating the efforts of Ethiopian government for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem the Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia said that his government wanted to solve the problem of Eritrea within the context of aspirations of the nationalities of Ethiopia in their entirety, with regional autonomy to each nationality. He emphasized that in Eritrea there is no homogeneous nationality, there are various nationalities and majority of them have accepted the National Democratic Revolutionary Program for Peaceful Solution of Eritrean Problem. See Ien Godaard, "An Interview with Ethiopia's Foreign Minister", Journal of Africa (New Jersey), April-June, 1978, vol.1, no.2, p. 4.

USA must now be bitterly regretting the incurring of the hatred of a nation's people for the sake of military expediency.⁵⁰ This seems to clarify the real US intention in dominating both Ethiopia and Eritrea during the haile Selassie regime and its ⁱⁿ consistency and opportunism in following a partisan policy towards Ethiopia because it is headed by a government which refused to adopt the American approach in its domestic and foreign policy formulations and discontinued facilities for the Kagnew Military Base.

In response to the allegation of President Carter in April 1978, that 17,000 Cuban troops were preparing to attack Eritrea, an ELF spokesman himself clarified that his organization had no proof of Cuban involvement or either in ground fighting or in simultaneous air raids on targets round Asmara and along the Red Sea Coast.⁵¹ This shows how wild are the allegations often made by Western sources and how a later report contradicts an earlier one.

Without any definite evidence Western sources spread the rumour in May 1978 that Ethiopia-Cuban friendship was strained due to, (i) alleged Cuban and Russian pressure on the Ethiopian Government to make way for a civilian government under the outlawed Marxist party, the Meison; (ii) alleged smuggling in of a Meison leader, Dr Magede Eobezze, into Ethiopia, and, (iii) differences over 'manner of tackling' the rebellion in Eritrea.

50. The Times, 12 May 1978.

51. The Times, 17 May 1978.

52. Times of India, 2 June 1978.

Such speculation deserves to be treated cautiously as earlier rumours of cracks in the Cuban-Ethiopian friendship from the same Western sources have turned out to be baseless, vague, contradictory, exaggerated and propagandist in nature.⁵³

It was reported in June 1978 after a 10-day visit of Moscow by ELF Head Nasser that the two biggest Eritrean guerrilla organisations agreed for a direct negotiation with Ethiopia's left-wing military leader for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem.⁵⁴ This supports our earlier stand that the Soviet Union was trying and hoping for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem.

It was vaguely reported in July 1978 that in a major offensive against Eritrean secessionists Ethiopian troops, flanked by 70,000 armed farmers from Lessie, and by another 80,000 from the Beghemedir Province, had converged on Eritrea before opening their attacks with napalm, phosphorus and cluster bombs.⁵⁵ But there were conflicting reports about who won - Ethiopia or the Eritrean secessionists.⁵⁶ So, these type of conflicting and contradictory reports cannot be relied upon for forming any conclusive opinion.

In August 1978 an Eritrean guerrilla spokesman in Rome denied any direct Cuban involvement against them.⁵⁷ An Ethiopian

53. Times of India, 27 June 1978.

54. Africa Confidential, vol. 19, no. 214, 7 July 1978, p. 5.

55. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 27 July 1978. Also see, International Herald Tribune, 27 July 1978.

56. Ibid.

57. See, David Lamb, "Ethiopia Seen Winning War in Eritrea", International Herald Tribune, 4 September 1978.

government spokesmen also claimed that there were no foreign troops in the war against Eritrean secessionists.⁵⁸ This contradicts Western allegation that there were a large number of Soviet and Cuban troops in Ethiopia fighting against the Eritrean secessionists.

It was reported that while he was on a visit to Addis Ababa in September 1978, Cuban President Fidel Castro favoured a negotiated settlement of Eritrean problem and reaffirmed his absolute opposition to any kind of secession.⁵⁹ This shows that Cuba would prefer negotiations for regional autonomy for Eritrea, or for a federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia, rather than any military conflict between them. This once again disproves Western allegation that Cuban policy was to escalate Eritrean secessionist problem. Western sources reported in November 1978 that the USSR had started a new diplomatic initiative to split the Eritreans by getting the Marxist leaders in their camp to sign an agreement for the formation of a new federation within which the Eritreans would have to accept less than independence and there would be a federation of Marxist Ethiopia and Marxist Eritrea.⁶⁰ This shows the nature of wild allegation made by the Western sources while Soviet and Cuban efforts have been to try for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem.

58. Ibid., Also see National Herald, 12 September 1978.

59. International Herald Tribune, 23 October 1978.

60. Amrita Bazar Patrika, (Calcutta), 21 November, 1978.

An EPLF spokesman in Khartoum claimed in December that the Ethiopian forces were directed by Soviet Generals, Soviet officers and supplied with sophisticated Soviet equipments, tanks and aircraft.⁶¹

As regards this allegation Thomas Reston, a spokesman for the US State Department, said in Washington that there was no information to indicate direct Soviet or Cuban participation in the fighting, but he attributed the Ethiopian Government's military successes to arms provided by the Soviet Union and to the role played by Soviet and Cuban advisers.^{61a} This shows that even the western sources could not confirm direct Soviet or Cuban participation in the war against Eritrean secessionists.

Soviet-Ethiopian Treaty Agreement

A 20-year treaty of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia was signed in Moscow in November 1978 after the visit of the Ethiopian Head of State, Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The treaty stated that both countries would "develop and deepen the relations of unbreakable friendship and cooperation" in political, economic, trade, scientific, technical and cultural spheres, "on the basis of equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders"

⁶¹. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives, Vol. 26, 4 January 1980, P. 30015

^{61a} *ibid*

and also respecting each other's foreign policies. The subject of continued military aid by Soviet Union to Ethiopia was dealt with in Article 10 which stated that "in the interests of ensuring the defence capacity, of the two countries, they shall continue to cooperate in the military field".⁶²

No further details of this cooperation was given.

A joint communique stated that both sides had "held a comprehensive and constructive exchange of views on questions of further strengthening and developing the relations of friendship and all-round cooperation between the Soviet Union and socialist Ethiopia as well as on certain topical international problems of mutual interest."⁶³ In connection with the latter point both countries "reaffirmed" the necessity for a political settlement to the conflicts in the Horn of Africa "on the basis of renunciation of territorial claims respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers and non-interference in each other's internal affairs."⁶⁴

In a further agreement signed in Addis Ababa in April 1979, the Soviet Union extended a low interest loan of 50,000,000 roubles to Ethiopia for agricultural development, including the repair of agricultural machinery and the construction of grain silos and cold storage plants.⁶⁵

52. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives, vol.25, 2 February 1979, p. 29435.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives, vol.26, 4 January, 1980, p. 30017.

In September 1979 both countries signed a protocol extending technical cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery, geology, oil and gas exploration, and providing aid for the expansion of the oil refinery at Assab towards a target of 100,000 tonnes per year.⁶⁶

This reflects wide-ranging economic cooperation between Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

At the end of our discussion it is necessary to see if the position of Soviet Union and United States have changed on the question of Eritrean problem after the ¹⁹⁷⁴ Ethiopian ~~or~~ Revolution⁶⁸ have remained consistent with their earlier stand. For proper understanding of changes we have to take a historical view and go back to UN General Assembly Debate of 1950.

Changing Soviet Stand on Eritrean Problem

As noted, in the Plenary meeting of UN General Assembly session in 1950, the Soviet delegate pointed out that in considering the fate of Eritrea which was one of the former Italian colonies, the United Nations must take a decision which should satisfy the desire of the Eritrean people for freedom from national oppression. He maintained that if federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia was a compromise solution, it was a compromise among the colonial powers as it was being imposed on the Eritreans and also on Ethiopia, and it would be equally unsatisfactory to Ethiopia because the latter with

66. Ibid., p. 30018.

its own shattered economy might not be able to make Eritrea economically self-dependent. So, Soviet Union fought for the resolution calling for granting of independence to Eritrea in the General Assembly session of 1950 and advocated the principle of national self-determination for the Eritreans against the oppressive and feudal regime of Haile Selassie throughout 1950s and 1960s till 1976.

Meanwhile, as noted, the Ethiopian Revolution took place in 1974 and the Haile Selassie regime was overthrown by a military government which was wedded to socialist policies for solution of problems like regional backwardness and disparities. The new government appealed to the Eritreans to have a peaceful and constructive dialogue with the Ethiopian government and peacefully solve the Eritrean problem.

In 1976, the Provisional Military Administrative Council issued a Nine-Point Peace Programme which stipulated wide-ranging reform measures like removal of regional disparities of various provinces like Eritrea, granting of equal right and autonomy to Eritrea within the federation of Ethiopia and setting of a Special Commission to work out the details of these reform measures.

After this announcement Soviet Union changed its position from asking for full independence for Eritrea to autonomy within the federation of Ethiopia in accordance with the Nine-Point Peace Programme, with the hope that the Eritrean

problem could be solved peacefully. Moreover, Soviet Union realised that with its backward economy, Eritrea could solve its multifarious socio-economic problems through the help of the socialist policies of the Ethiopian government, unlike the feudal and oppressive regime of Haile Selassie.

Soviet Union felt that the progressive Eritreans and the socialist government of Ethiopia, both wedded to socialist policies for solution of economic problems of Eritrea, should not fight over the issue of Eritrean secessionism, but rather should solve the problem amicably through granting of regional autonomy to Eritrea within federation of Ethiopia, lest the situation might be exploited by the Arab and western powers for their own selfish interest to dominate the Horn region.

So, the changing position of Soviet stand should be viewed in the light of the above developments.

But the Eritrean secessionists did not care for the Soviet and Ethiopian appeal for the solution of the Eritrean problem in accordance with the Nine-Point Peace Programme and sought the support of the Arab and western powers by continuing their movement against the Ethiopian government.

The Eritrean secessionists (EPLNA) based in America attacked the change in the Soviet policy in the following words :

The essential reason of the ignominious reversal of the USSR policy is to be found in the demands of the exploited Eritrean masses but in the fundamental changes that took place in the Soviet

contd...

Union, after the Khrushchovites usurped power following the death of Stalin. 67

The two organizations - EPLF and ELF, did not agree with EFLNA position. The Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) and Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) disagreed with EFLNA which expresses the American position on Eritree. The EFLNA criticises ELF and EPLF in the following words:

Proceeding from their erroneous identification of the friends and enemies of the Eritrean revolution i. e., their recognition of the Soviet Union as a strategic ally, the EPLF and ELF leaders have made serious errors on other questions such as the characterization of the Ethiopian military junta as an anti-imperialist regime.

... They see the Dergue as a regime that has "cut off its relations with imperialism, Zionism and reactionary forces", as a "force that forms part of the so-called "world revolutionary forces" with whom a negotiated settlement can be reached on the Eritrean question and consider the massive military and political support bestowed to it by the Soviet revisionists as an anti-imperialist solidarity. 68

It will be historically incorrect to agree with the EFLNA statement because Soviet Union has tried for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem through the Nine-Point Peace Programme of the Ethiopian government.

67. See Eritrea in Struggle (Newsletter of Eritreans for Liberation in North America (New York), vol.3, no.2, December 1978 - January 1979, p. 5.

68. Ibid., p. 13.

Changing American Stand on Eritrean Problem

As noted, United States introduced a resolution in the Plenary Meeting of General Assembly in 1950 calling for a federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea and opposed the resolution calling for granting of independence to Eritrea.

As noted, throughout 1950s and 1960s up to 1974, it gave heavy military aid to the friendly Haile Selassie regime against the Eritrean secessionists.

But after the overthrow of the Haile Selassie regime in 1974, when a military government wedded to Socialist policies took over in Ethiopia, and refused to toe the approach of United States in its foreign and domestic policy formulation United States started rethinking on further supporting the Ethiopian government against the Eritrean secessionists.

As noted, in 1975 the Ethiopian government ordered the closure of the Kagnaw military base because of a guerrilla attack on the telecommunication base.

In the same year, the ELF sources kidnapped some American servicemen from Kagnaw base which might have embarrassed America as to whether to continue its support to the Ethiopian government which was leaning to the "left", but at the same time USA could not alienate the Arab powers who were supporting the Eritrean secessionists. USA was in a dilemma concerning the possible Soviet help to Ethiopia against the Eritrean secessionists in case USA stopped giving giving aid to Ethiopia because America interpreted

the appeal of Soviet Union for peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem in 1976 as support to the Ethiopian government.

As noted, in May 1976 America warned the Ethiopian government that USA would stop giving aid to it in case the Ethiopian government continue to suppress the Muslim rebels in Eritrea. This position of United States was obviously inconsistent with its earlier policy of total support to Ethiopia during Haile Selassie regime. Obviously America seemed to be worried about the Nine-Point Peace Programme announced by the Ethiopian Government for the solution of the Eritrean problem in May 1976 because if the Eritrean problem would be solved, USA might not be able to dominate Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In April 1977 the Western journalists and American advisory group expelled from Ethiopia on the charge of false propaganda which was favouring the Eritrean secessionist movement.⁷⁰ Ethiopian government took it as a pointer of definite change on earlier American stand of support to Ethiopian government.

CONCLUSION

The issue which has been discussed in this chapter is the problem of Eritrean secessionist insurgency. The Ethiopian government which came to power in 1974 after the February

70. See n. 26.

revolution tried to solve this problem peacefully, and the Eritreans did not give a positive response.

The Soviet and Cuban governments tried for a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem, for unity of Eritreans and Ethiopians against western manoeuvres to cause greater rift between them.

The USA was openly against the Ethiopian socialist government because it was displeased by the socialist measures taken by the Ethiopian government to solve the Eritrean problem. It stopped giving military aid to Ethiopia because latter withdrew the facilities available to USA at Kagnaw military base.

From the above study it appears that the Soviet Union wants maintenance of peace in the Horn area and a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem because the Arab powers and the United States want to exploit the conflict between Eritrean secessionist and the Ethiopian government to their advantage, because by frequent conflict the limited economic resources of the region cannot be utilised for the rapid economic development of the region and any continuing war will weaken Ethiopia and is likely to create unstable condition within the country. Ethiopia and the Soviet Union signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and cooperation in November 1978 which stipulated technical, scientific and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Ethiopia and Soviet Union further signed agreement in April 1979 and a protocol in September 1979 by which Soviet Union promised to provide economic aid to Ethiopia for various industrial projects.

Soviet Union which supported the resolution asking for independence to Eritrea in the General Assembly session in 1950 changed its position and favoured regional autonomy in 1976 after the announcement of the Nine-Point Peace Programme by the Ethiopian socialist government which promised wide-ranging economic reforms to remove backwardness of Eritrea.

United States which supported creation of Ethiopia-Eritrean federation in the General Assembly session of 1950 and gave heavy military aid to the regime of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia paid a lukewarm attitude in helping Ethiopia against the Eritrean secessionists when a military government wedded to socialist policies took over in 1974.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1977 CGADES WAR

Chapter IV

THE 1977 OGADEN WAR

After discussion of the main tenets of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 and the change of attitude of Super Powers towards the Eritrean problem, it is necessary to discuss the role of USA and her allies i.e. the Arab powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. in the aggression on Ethiopia by Somalia and Somalia and backed Western Somalian Liberation Front (WSLF).¹ The WSLF had launched an armed movement to free Ogaden from Ethiopian hold and federate it into Somalia. The timing of WSLF attack on Ethiopian territory coincided with the Eritrean secessionist insurgency, internal troubles such as famine, and political difficulties in Ethiopia.

We have provided evidence to show that Ogaden is a part of Ethiopia and that the government in Mogadishu has no right to claim that the province of Ogaden was ever part of Somali state because there was never one unified Somali state covering all the five regions on which Somalia lays its claim. Historically the Horn region was not under one ruler. It was divided into numerous regions each of which was ruled by chiefs, Sultans and Amirs.² These inhabitant tribes or ethnic groups which had a number of things in common also differed

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1. The OAU resolution passed in the OAU Committee (Eight Nation Good Offices Group) held in August 1977 (in Libereville, Gabon) calls the Somalian attack an aggression on Ethiopia. Also see Vijay Gupta, "US Design Fails in the Horn of Africa", Mainstream, vol. 16, no. 33, 15 April 1978, p. 26. Also see, Vijay Gupta, "The Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict and Role of External Powers", Foreign Affairs Report, March 1978, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 46-47.
 2. See the Appendices in Ramon G. Bheradwej, The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa, (Sterling Publishers, 1979), pp. 179-244.

from each other in various ways. Hence ~~Somalian~~ support to WSLF and aggression on Ethiopia in 1977 is unjust and it violates all international conventions.³

We have already mentioned that after the 1974 Ethiopian revolution the Ethiopian government declared its allegiance to socialism and pledged to fight feudalism, racism, imperialism and neo-colonialism and to have friendship with non-aligned and socialist countries. This fact angered the US government, but, as stated, it gradually changed its attitude from supporting the Ethiopian government (as it did during the Haile Selassie regime) to indirectly instigating Somalia, in connivance with countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc., to attack Ethiopia on the Ogaden issue and break its (Somalia's) friendship with the Soviet Union. As stated, during the Haile Selassie regime, USA supported Ethiopia throughout the period 1950-73 on the Ogaden issue by saying that territories acquired by colonial legacy should be respected and USA during that period did not accept or support ~~Somalian~~ propaganda against Ethiopia.

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3. The membership of OAU presumes that the member-country accepts the boundaries of each other as inherited from the colonial rule and that they should not tolerate any subversive activities originating in their country against another member-state of OAU. See Article 3, paragraph 5 of the OAU Charter of 1963. Also see, OAU Resolutions nos. 16(1) and 27(11) of July 1964. See Article 11(3) of OAU Charter, i. e. respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity (OAU Council of Ministers Resolution COM/Resolution 3(11), 15 February 1964, Resolution COM/Res. 4(11), 15 February 1964, COM Res. 19(11), 24-29 February 1964. See Appendix in Gupta, "The Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict...", n.l pp. 50-53.

To understand the 1977 Ogaden war and the role of USSR and USA we have to understand the changes and developments in Ethiopia, during 1974-77. Let us first understand the Somali problem.

The Somali constitution provides for the reclamation of the five territories of the Horn. During Somalia-Soviet friendship and since 1963 of OAU agreement on boundaries there has been subdued attitude on the question of greater Somalia. The fanatic muslims, American and Saudi Arabians had been pressing the government of Somalia to again take up greater Somalia ~~set up~~ ^{issue}. And one of the reasons for the overthrow of the Somali civilian government in 1969 was its moderate policy on the Ogaden issue. The military government which took over tilted to wards the Soviet bloc countries with the hope of getting their support for their claim on Ogaden. This they thought was possible because of Soviet support to Eritrean self-determination movement, Soviet opposition to the monarchic government in Ethiopia, Soviet attitude towards two neighbouring states ~~to~~ Sudan and Kenya which were pro-western. This tilt was received in Western capitals and USA as an unfriendly gesture, particularly because of its strategic position on the Red Sea, which is the oil route to Europe.

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4. See David D. Laitin, "The Political Economy of Military Rule in Somalia", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 14(3), 1976, pp. 449-468; Al Castagno, "Somalia Goes Military", Africa Report, 15(2), February 1970, pp. 25-27; Gupta, "The Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict and Role of External Powers", n.1, p. 41; Gupta, "US Design Fails in the Horn of Africa", n.1, p. 24.

418-482 Policies of Western Powers

The West which had been cultivating friendship of the horn countries since World War II, found its interests threatened. The USA increased its aid to Ethiopia and piled more arms,⁵ and its attitude on the Eritrean and Ogeden issue⁶ favoured Ethiopia during the Haile Selassie regime. Somalia, in order to strengthen its position militarily, entered into a treaty of friendship with the USSR.⁷ Soviet ships were given refuelling facilities at Berbera port.⁸ The USA and the West denounced Somalia, and accused it of providing a military base to the Soviet Union at Berbera.⁹ This accusation could

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5. See, US ACDA, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1966-1975 (Washington, 1976), p.79. quoted in Mohammad Ayoub, "The Horn of Africa: Regional Conflict and Super Power Involvement", (Canberra Papers in Strategy and Defence (1978) no.18, p. 11. According to ACDA reports from 1966 to 1975 Ethiopia got \$151 million of arms of which \$120 million came from USA. Also see IISS, The Military Balance 1976-77, (London, 1977), p. 42. quoted in Mohammad Ayoub, op.cit., p. 11.
 6. See Gupta, "US Design Fails in the Horn of Africa", n.1, Also see Indian Express (Delhi), 22 May 1976.
 7. Ibid., p. 26. Also see Ayoub, "The Horn of Africa....", n. 5, p. 13 as quoted from Australia and the Indian Ocean Report from the Australian Senate standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Canberra, 1976, p. 21.
 8. Ibid., Also see n.6.
 9. A group of US Congressmen invited to inspect the port in 1975 confirmed that there were no Soviet military installations there. See Gupta, Ethiopian-Somalia Conflict and Role of External Powers, n.1, p. 41.

not be substantiated, and even US Congressmen went back from Berbers unconvinced of the charge. The US Senate Foreign Relations sub-committee revealed the little known treaty between Ethiopia and USA existing since 1960.¹⁰

As reported in April 1975, even after the Revolution, Ethiopia tried to obtain from the USA more than \$100 million worth of modern arms, including tanks and war planes. But the USA insisted on ready cash payment by Ethiopia, and refused grants or credits.¹¹ The reason was US displeasure with the new Ethiopian regime which had come to power in 1974 by overthrowing Haile Selassie and which tilted towards socialist path. In the post-1974 revolution period Ethiopian-US relations further deteriorated. The US on the other hand, started supporting the Eritrean secessionists¹² and in this they were joined by the Arabs¹³ who wanted total control over the Red sea.

10. See, n. 23, ch.2. The testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-committee by State and Defence Department officials showed that an unpublicised treaty between USA and Ethiopia in 1960 was concluded for US support to the 40,000-man Ethiopian army.

The testimony showed that since 1960, USA had provided military assistance to Ethiopia worth \$147 million including supersonic jet fighters, supplied bombs and ammunition to the Ethiopian forces for use against Eritrean insurgency, supplied military teams to train Ethiopians in counter-insurgency and stationed 3,200 US military personnel in Ethiopia to operate a secret electronic intelligence network for monitoring communication within Soviet Union.

The testimony revealed what Senator Flbright called "very artful in-depth concealment" of what USA was doing in Ethiopia.

By the agreement, the testimony revealed, USA reaffirmed its "continuing interest in the security of Ethiopia and its opposition to any activities threatening the territorial integrity of Ethiopia", See African Recorder, vol.9, no. 23, Nov. 5-18, 1970, p. 2663.

11. International Herald Tribune, 26 April 1975.

12. See Patriot, 23 August 1977.

It was reported in September 1975 that due to continued US support to Eritreans the US surveillance base at Kagnaw, which was functioning since 1953, was to be closed by the end of the year.¹⁴ After the take over of the Chairmanship of the *Derque* by ^{an}old American contact Teferre Bente the US tried to persuade the Ethiopian government to change its decision and in January 1976 the USA decided to modernize the 40,000-men Ethiopian armed forces to enable them to face any Somali threat.¹⁵ In May 1976 they promised \$ 175 million credit sales of arms to Ethiopia.¹⁶ The Marxist leadership of Ethiopia was suspicious of USA because reports had reached them of the US and Arab diplomatic attempts,¹⁷ to persuade Somalia to break with the USSR on a promise of US-Arab support for the Ogaden claims and economic aid including funds for overcoming economic difficulties.¹⁸

This also coincided with Somalian internal economic problems, Somalian President Siad Barre's illness, release of fanatic opponents of Barre from prison. Somalian government in an attempt to divert people's attention from internal

from last page...13. see n. 7.

14. See African Recorder, vol. 14, no.22, 4 Oct-22 November 1975, p. 4096.

15. See International Herald Tribune, 21 January 1976.

16. See Richard F. Bissell, "Reflections on the Quarter", Orbis, vol. 21, no. 4, Winter 1978, pp.658-59.

17. See n. 7.

18. Ibid.

economic difficulties again raised the issue of Ogaden. In this it got ready support of the Arabs and USA.¹⁹

The Ethiopians drew up a 39-page Memorandum entitled "War Clouds in the Horn of Africa", which exposed to friendly African countries the Somali intentions of attacking Ethiopia.²⁰

We have seen that the USA in 1975 did not agree to give arms to Ethiopia on credit but after the Ethiopian Memorandum was sent to African countries revealing the Somali intentions of attacking Ethiopia, the USA apparently changed its tactics and decided to give arms to Ethiopia on credit in May 1976. We have to see whether this was a move to help Ethiopia or to confuse the situation.

As stated, this coincided with the re-emergence of fanatic pro-Arab elements in Somali politics in 1976 during the illness of Somali President, Siad Barre, who had to release his jailed opponents under Arab pressure.²¹ These opponents were mainly Muslims who instigated people against socialist ideology and against Somali friendship with Soviet Union. These led to the deterioration in Somali-Soviet friendship. As stated above, up to February 1977 USA was attempting to make moves for enlisting Arab support to instigate Somalia to attack Ethiopia.²² In February 1977

19. Ibid.

20. See African Recorder, vol. 15, no.6, 11-24, March 1976, p. 4203.

21. See n. 6.

22. See n. 1. Gupta, "Ethiopia-Somali Conflict...", n.1, p. 24. The National Security Affairs Adviser to US President was asked to initiate a policy to effect a change in the situation in Red Sea Zone "in every possible way to get Somalia to be our friend". See International Herald Tribune, (Paris) 27 July 1977.

when the Marxists took over power in Ethiopia, the West was convinced that Ethiopia would not come into their fold as it had opted for socialism and started instigating Somalia and other neighbours of Ethiopia to create difficulties in the way of Ethiopian development. At this juncture we note the rise of the rightwing faction in Somalia and its designs to invade Ethiopia.²³

Socialist Countries for Settlement

The pressure of the fanatics or pro-Arab elements in Somalia started increasing and there was talk of attacking Ethiopia at a time when it was already deep in trouble due to internal political and ideological factors and the secessionist pressure in Eritrea. Somalia had not yet broken its treaty with the Soviet Union nor its friendship with socialist

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23. See Information from Cuba, vol. 16, no. 5, June 1978, p. 5. In this context, US President Carter through his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and National Security Affairs Adviser Zbigniew Brezemsinski, initiated a policy of making all efforts to change the situation in the Red Sea Zone "in every possible way to get Somalia to be our friend". See International Herald Tribune (Paris), 27, July 1977. This statement shows that United States was attempting to keep Somalia on its side at any cost. It started making efforts to enlist the support of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, who were worried about the presence of Socialist regimes in Somalia and Ethiopia, because that may pose a challenge to their feudal systems. The Arab powers were also worried about the Somali-Soviet and Soviet-Ethiopian friendship because that would pose a challenge to the presence of Arabs in Red Sea Zone which is a cheap and safe route for oil.

countries. The socialist world was regarding Somalia and Ethiopia as their own friends in order to solve the problem. The Socialist world tried to initiate discussion for a negotiated settlement. This is evident from the fact that a meeting was called in Sanaa at Aden in March 1977, initiated by Cuba, of Somalia, Ethiopia and South Yemen to discuss the problems between Ethiopia and Somalia. As a result of the meeting Somalia agreed not to invade Ethiopia. The news of the Somali promise was confirmed by Fidel Castro, the Cuban President, in a speech in Havana in 1978 when he said, "... at the Aden meeting the leaders of Somalia solemnly pledged, solemnly committed themselves not to invade Ethiopia ever, not to attack Ethiopia militarily..."²⁴

In the Aden meeting it was mooted that the dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia should be solved peacefully through negotiation and attempt should be made to create a confederation of the two countries. But Somalia did not agree to the Cuban proposal of creating a confederation to solve the border problem. The western powers, instead of welcoming the possibility of peace in the Horn, tried to instigate the countries concerned by alleging that Moscow and Havana were trying to coax Ethiopia and Somalia for a confederation to "dominate"²⁵ the Horn area and the Red Sea Zone.

24. Ibid., p. 6. Also see Punyapriya Dasgupta, "Strikes in the Red Sea", Indian Express (Delhi), 15 April 1977.

25. See p. Dasgupta, n. 24.

Arab League Enters the Fray

Meanwhile Somalia joined the Arab League in March 1977. This facilitated the possibilities of collaboration between Somalia and Arab League members against Ethiopia. This resulted in the Taiz meeting initiated by Sudan, between Somalia, North Yemen and Sudan. It decided to pay Somalia a large amount of cash to mount an attack on Ethiopia. Officially Saudi Arabia promised to give 18 million dollars of aid to Somalia.²⁶ The Summit Communique declared its aim to make Red Sea a "Lake of real peace and coordinate their policies on Ethiopia".²⁷ The reasons for the preparedness of Arab governments to help Somalia can be seen in the fact that Ethiopia had chosen to build a Marxist-Leninist system. The Arab countries - the oil Sheikhdoms - were afraid of political repercussions in their own countries if Ethiopia were to succeed in solving its economic problems. Also an economically independent Ethiopia could pose a challenge to Saudi Arabian plan to turn the Red Sea into an Arab Lake and become the master of the waterway.

The changes in the Horn are to be viewed not only in the light of developments in Somalia and Ethiopia but also in other neighbouring areas, eg., we have to take note of

- (1) Saudi Arabia's desire to become the master of the Red sea;
- (2) Sudan's domestic troubles which included opposition to

26. See International Herald Tribune, 4 June 1977. Also see, New York Times, 5 May 1977; The Guardian, 17 July 1977.

27. Ibid.

Numeinj's regime, financial breakdown of the state, stagnation in the economy and Anyonya (Southern Sudan) rebellion; (3) Egypt's unfriendly relations with the USSR after the 1973 war with Israel and its increasing dependence on the USA for solution of the Palestine problem and more so of freeing its own territory from Israel; (4) Saudi Arabian interests in Sudan and utilization of the Nile waters for turning the area into the 'bread basket' of the Arab world.²⁸ Above all we have to take into account the western interest in the Red Sea and the Horn, their fear of Soviet dominance of the area. The USA and the Western powers, in order to safeguard their traditional interests in the area and avoid ouster from the region, schemed to create trouble leading to the armed conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. The Arab League membership of Somalia was used to penetrate the policy-making bodies of Somalia and convince them of regaining their lost region - the Ogaden area - from Ethiopia at a time when Ethiopia was in trouble facing Eritrean secessionist problem, famine, political difficulties.

In May 1977 Somalia threatened that if Ethiopia invades Djibouti, then Somalia would go to war with Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government made it clear that it does not have any claim on Djibouti and supported its independence and sovereignty.

The Ethiopian government stated that Djibouti forms one of Ethiopia's trade routes, the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway

28. Ibid.

being the main economic lifeline and link between the two countries. In spite of this assurance, Somalia launched an attack on Ethiopia, by destroying the bridges along this route. According to Ethiopian government, the Somali objectives in this regard were:

1. To deprive Ethiopia of its traditional import-export access to the sea and to strangle her economically.
2. To make it impossible for Ethiopia to deploy its regular and militia forces as well as her war material to the battle front.
3. To render the people of Djibouti dependent on Somalia and other reactionary Arab regimes by blocking the flow of essential goods and services from Ethiopia and by so doing disrupt relations between Djibouti and Ethiopia and ultimately to isolate Ethiopia. 29

The Ethiopian argument is valid as Djibouti forms an important trade link for import and export of goods to and from Ethiopia and the purpose of destroying the bridges and railways line along Djibouti was to block the flow of essential goods to Ethiopia and cripple Ethiopian economy.

Policy Reversal by President Carter

While the Somalis attempted to block the supply route of Ethiopia, the Americans withdrew their offer of arms sale to Ethiopia "on the grounds of violation of human rights" in Ethiopia.³⁰ Addis Ababa, in retaliation, ordered closure of

29. See n. 23, pp. 11-12.

30. Ethiopian Herald, 23 April 1977; The Financial Times (London), 29 April 1977.

four US organisations in Ethiopia.³¹ After this President Carter stopped all arms deliveries to Ethiopia which were on the way according to earlier promise, forcing it to depend on the Soviet Union for arms.

In this connection Carter's policy statement reads:

30. No military assistance may be provided to Uganda, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Mozambique, Ethiopia or Uruguay. 32
50. Credit for Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, Ethiopia, Uganda, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Mozambique and Angola is prohibited. 33

This policy statement shows that governments with radical policies had to face the US wrath, whereas there was no restraint in giving aid to oppressive regimes like that in the then Iran, which had a favourable approach towards the USA.

Moreover, the USA wanted to embarrass Ethiopia by stopping military aid when that country was facing trouble on all fronts, i.e., famine, Eritrean secessionist insurgency, attack by Somalia on the Ogaden province.

In this context, it is necessary to refer to the US foreign policy on Ethiopia which was clarified by William Scheuffle, US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, in the

31. Ibid.

32. See Paul Y. Hammond, David J., Lonschev, Michael D. Salomon, "Controlling US Arms Transfers, The Emerging System", *Orbis*, vol.23, no.2, Summer 1979, p. 346.

33. Ibid., p. 347.

Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, in August 1976, in these words:

"we are well aware that our military aid is a two-edged sword and that it is a major support if the present government with whose actions we do not always agree, particularly in the field of human rights". 34

This statement reinforces the argument that America now stopped military aid to Ethiopia because it did not agree with the policies adopted by Ethiopian government in its domestic and foreign affairs.

The USA tried to inflict further injury by refusing to vote for the two-million-dollar World Bank loans for Ethiopia. however, it was granted in spite of US opposition. ³⁵ This shows that USA tried to influence the World Bank not to give loan to Ethiopia, for its economic development due to US hostility towards that country.

On a US scheme to mount a military attack by Sudan and the WSLF on Ethiopia, President Carter held further discussions with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, France, Britain and on 13 July 1977, Somali Vice-President General Hussain Kulmiyeh Afareh signed agreements with Saudi Arabia after heavy cash payment for "throwing the Soviets out of Somalia". ³⁶

34. Indian Express, 21 December 1976.

35. USA abstained from voting on a \$25 million irrigation loan and \$32 million loan to improve 8000 km of road in Ethiopia but loans were still approved by the world Bank.

36. See Afro-Asian Affairs (London), no.52, 28 July 1977; Hindustan Times, 9 August 1977. Also see Information from Cuba, n.23, pp. 6-8.

Officially in 1976, Saudi Arabia had given Somalia a 28 million dollar aid and in 1977, an 18 million dollars aid.³⁷

As regards United States design in Ethiopia it is emphasised:

At the back of these political manoeuvres, was probably the US design to have the whole of the Red Sea within its sphere of influence and that of its allies. The need for early steps had arisen with the expulsion of the US military mission from Ethiopia, followed by the suspension of American arms sale to Ethiopia. The US 'Operation Take Over Red Sea' could be easily launched because the ground was already prepared in the Horn of Africa which had become a scene of several escalating conflicts. In Eritrea, the secessionists' war was heading to a climax, while in Southeast Ethiopia, Somali-backed guerrillas with the help of Loyalists [but claiming to be a Marxist organization - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)] had penetrated deep into the Ethiopian territory. To this was added internal sabotage in Ethiopia which the EPRP had instigated and with which the Ethiopian authorities had to deal. 38

This amply describes the US design in Ethiopia, to embarrass Ethiopia when it was already facing internal problems like Eritrean secessionist insurgency, famine, etc.

Soviet Attitude

In August 1977 Western sources revealed that West was accusing the Soviet Union of trying "to save" its newly won ally Ethiopia from being ruined, and that it wanted to give a large part of Ogaden to Somalia and some parts, including

37. See International Herald Tribune, 4 June 1977; Also see Ayoub, n.5, p. 17.

38. See Gupta, "Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict...", n.1, pp.43-44.

the key towns of Dire Dawa and Herrer to Ethiopia.³⁹ The same sources also reported that the Soviet Union again appealed to both Somalia and Ethiopia to end their armed hostility and start constructive dialogue for normalization of relations.⁴⁰

The Soviet appeal said, "The continuation of the armed clashes is fraught with grave aftermaths for the peoples of that area, for the cause of the Ethiopian and Somali revolution. The invasion of the territory of one country by the armed forces of the other inflicts damage to the cause of peace and security of peoples in Africa and all over the world."⁴¹ The Soviet statement clearly shows that it did not want a conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. Still the Western sources continued to make wild charges.

Somali and Sudanese Intervention

While the Soviet Union was making an attempt to avoid war between Ethiopia and Somalia, the Saudis and Egyptians were working out an invasion plan by Sudan and Somalia against Ethiopia. This was reported in a Beirut daily, Al-Watan.⁴² It further reported that Egyptian President had hatched a plan with Somali President in Cairo for an invasion on Ethiopia in November 1977.

39. See Times of India (Delhi), 6 August 1977.

40. See Times of India (Delhi), 15 August 1977.

41. Ibid.

42. See Zambia Lally (Lusaka), 14 December 1977. Also see n. 5, pp.26-27.

Before the Ogaden War, Ethiopia had only 60,800 soldiers (with 6,000 men of the Territorial Army mobilised to guard the bridges in Eritrea) and 20,000 reservists as against 52,600 of Sudan and 66,000 of Somalia (25,000 Somali troops were on the Ethiopian border.).⁴³

Taking advantage of Ethiopian Army's preoccupation with the Sudan border and with Eritrean secessionists, the WSLF attacked the Ogaden region in November 1977. According to the Ethiopians the WSLF was a Somalia organization, but the Somalis denied it. The Ethiopian government stated that sophisticated fighter planes, tanks, armoured carriers, rockets and heavy artillery were deployed by Somalia and given to the WSLF for launching a guerrilla offensive.⁴⁴ Referring to the military assistance given to the WSLF, Somali President Barre said on 2 November 1977: "We are helping them to the best of our ability", but denied the presence of Somali troops in Ogaden.⁴⁵ Ethiopia raised the issue in the OAU.

Somalia reiterated their denial which was not accepted by the OAU emergency session held in 1977. The OAU accused

43. See Africa, no.66, February 1977, pp.16-17. Also see Ayoub, n.5, pp.12-13; Gupta, "US Design...", n.1, p.26.

44. See "Support the Just Cause of the Ethiopian Peoples", Africa, n. 43, p. 12. ^{Footnote}

45. See The Guardian Weekly (Manchester), 13 November 1977; Also see Gupta, "US Design Fails...", n. 1, p. 26. But it was reported that some Somali officers were given retirement and asked to join WSLF. See Gupta, "Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict,...", n. 1.

Somalia of involvement in the conflict, and asked Somalia to respect the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and vacate the Ethiopian territory. ⁴⁶ But Somalia refused to abide by this decision.

The Soviet Union which was aiding Somalia under a treaty and also gave importance to newly acquired friend Ethiopia was put in an awkward position, when Ethiopia asked aid from Cuba and Soviet Union to defend its territory. Cuba after failing in attempts to bring Somalia and Ethiopia into a confederation sent military help to Ethiopia. ⁴⁷ This question created diplomatic crisis as Ethiopia received Libyan help and another Soviet friend, Iraq, supported Somali guerrillas.

46. See Daily News (Tanzania), 11 August 1977. The OAU Gulf offices Committee Meeting in Libreville (Gabon) from 5 to 8 August 1977 reaffirmed resolution AHG/RFS 27(11) which bind member-states in accordance with the charter of the OAU to respect the border existing at independence and adherence to the cardinal principles of holding inviolable sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. It appealed to Ethiopia and Somalia to cease acts of hostility. It rejected the Somali claim that the present fighting in Ogaden region was between Ethiopia and the so-called "Western ^{Somalian} Liberation Front" in Ogaden. The OAU meeting stated that the fighting was between Ethiopia and Somali armed forces, started by Somali aggression on Ogaden. See Appendix 1 in Gupta, "Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict and Role of External Powers", n.l, pp. 50 -53. The Appendix emphasises that the second conference of the Heads of State of the non-aligned countries in its Cairo Summit of October 1964 reaffirmed respect for frontiers of countries as they existed since independence.
47. Cuban President said, "All our personnel in Ethiopia are accredited as diplomatic personnel. There are no military advisers as such in Ethiopia. The right is of the government that request that we be there. See Barbara Walters, "An Interview with Fidel Castro", Foreign Policy, no. 28, Fall 1977, pp. 41-48.

In November 1977, Somalia abrogated the friendship treaty signed in 1974 with the Soviet Union, accusing that country of betraying the trust of the Somalians. This was welcomed by the Arab powers and the USA who were trying to alienate Somalia from Soviet friendship.⁴⁸ Somalia asked Soviet advisers to leave the country.

After the departure of Soviets from Somalia, the western powers like West Germany and USA under cover of food and emergency aid programmes entered Somalia.

After abrogation of treaty between the Soviet Union and Somalia the clouds of war were clearly seen in the horn area. Ethiopia, which was already facing many problems, and which had failed to obtain arms from USA, its traditional supplier, contacted the Soviet Union for immediate armament help and its strategic and tactical support.

In the first spell of fighting the Somalian forces reportedly killed 6,573 Ethiopian soldiers in the town of Dire Dawa. They claimed that they destroyed 33 tanks, 30 aircraft, 28 vehicles and had captured large quantities of

48. A Beirut daily, Al-Natan, reported that Egypt's President agreed to conduct a military offensive against Ethiopia during his talks with Somali President in Cairo in November 1977. The paper, reported "the planned military offensive would be one of President Sadat's highest surprise for the Soviet Union." This must have encouraged Somalia to abrogate the treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union. The western press jubilantly announced that Somalia had asked the Soviets to quit its territory. See Gupta, "US Design Fails in Horn of Africa", n.l, p. 26.

ammunition, arms and other military equipment. The Ethiopian side claimed to have destroyed 20 Somali tanks and armoured cars. But knowledgeable sources said that although there was evidence of tanks and aircraft being used, the figures were much below the stated level.⁴⁹ Although there were claims and counter-claims of inflicting losses, it could not be denied that both sides suffered from heavy casualties in men, armament and equipment. Large numbers of people were rendered homeless.

Besides Libyan and Iraqi help Ethiopia also reportedly got Israeli support which was however denied. The Soviets supplied arms and equipment and technicians. The Soviet Union also launched Cosmos 964 to conduct a military surveillance of the Horn area and to report the Somali penetration into Ogaden and arms supply to Ethiopia.

When Ethiopia was facing the Somalian attack, the Shah of Iran warned that "his country would not remain idle if Ethiopia violated Somalia's borders."⁵⁰ This statement annoyed the Africans and the OAU asked Iran not to meddle in Ethiopian-Somalian affairs. OAU accused Iran of being anti-African as it was the main aid supplier to South African Republic. Iran nevertheless continued to aid Somalia. In January 1978, West

49. See Gupta, "Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict...", n.l., pp.46-47.

50. See Gupta, "US Design Fails in Horn of Africa", n.l, p.27.

Germany also increased its aid from 12 to 20 million dollars and authorised Somalia to spend it on arms. An EEC delegation also visited Mogadishu to assess 'emergency' aid. The USA also started to deliver six million dollars worth of food to Somalia.⁵¹ All this aid naturally strengthened Somalia and enabled it to capture most of the Ogaden region by January 1978.

But the morale of the Ethiopian forces was still high and they were determined to recapture Ogaden region from the Somalian aggression. Apprehending the possibility of Somalia getting defeated in the long run, sensing the lack of support by OAU to USA in Somalian aggression and due to worldwide condemnation of Somalian aggression, the USA did not want to be directly involved in the Somalian-Ethiopian conflict nor did it want to have any confrontation with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

With this development, US president Carter stated in a press conference on 12 January 1978, that firstly America was using its influence to bring about peace without shipping arms to disputing parties or involving itself directly into a situation to be handled by the UN⁵¹ and OAU; secondly, that the US hoped for inducing Soviets "not to send either soldiers or weapons" into the area and to join "a rapid initiation of negotiation"; thirdly, that the Somalis "might call publicly negotiations to begin immediately to resolve the Ogaden dispute".⁵²

51. Ibid.

52. See Raymond L. Thurston, "The United States, Somalia and the Crisis in the Horn", Horn of Africa (New Jersey), vol. 1, no. 2, April/June 1978, p. 18.

This press statement was in total contradiction of earlier US policy encouraging Arab powers to instigate Somalia to attack the Ogaden region as enumerated above. The United States was clearly on the defensive because of lack of support to Somalia by the OAU. So, the USA tactically asked Somalia to start negotiation to resolve the Ogaden dispute, which along with Arab powers like Sudan and North Yemen and Western powers like Britain and France, it persuaded Somalia to confront Ethiopia and renew the claim on Ogaden region and thereby nullified the negotiation of Aden meeting where Somalia promised not to attack Ethiopia and pledged to solve its problems with Ethiopia through peaceful discussion.

On 22 January 1978, the Ethiopian forces launched their counter-offensive to regain Ogaden. With the help of Soviet technicians' help and Cuban troops they drove the Somalis out of the strategic harrar mountains and Jijiga. The Ethiopians captured large quantities of American arms (122 mm US artillery, RPG-7 rockets, 122 mm mortar charges, 37 mm anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank mines and ammunition crates with Pakistan, Iran and Egypt marks).⁵³ This shows that although the USA earlier promised not to send arms to Somalia in case of its aggression over Ethiopia, later it violated its own pledge and sent arms to Somalia through Arab countries.

The Ethiopian victory against Somalian aggression upset the plans of the USA and Arab powers to turn the Red Sea into

53. See Africa Recorder, vol. 17, no.5, 26 February - 11 March 1978, p. 4756.

an Arab lake and to discredit Ethiopian government before its own people. Moreover an Ethiopian victory would deny the Arabs control over the Red Sea. It would affect the feudal system of the Arab countries, and Somali design for hold On Ogaden and Eritrea.

In these circumstances, on 10 February 1978, US secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, issued a declaration calling for a ceasefire, withdrawal of Somali troops from Ethiopian territory and withdrawal of "Soviet and Cuban troops" from Ethiopia. This was a clever move to deny Ethiopia any further victory in the Ogaden region. The USA also warned that it would review its position should Ethiopian forces "invade" Somalia proper. This warning meant preservation of status quo after the capture of Ogaden by Somalia and denial of any right to recapture this region by Ethiopia.

In mid-February 1978, following an Ethiopian threat to break diplomatic ties with the USA, if it should send arms to Somalia, a three-man US delegation was sent to Ethiopia, headed by David Aaron, deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs, to woo Ethiopia from its friendship with socialist countries and assuring that the USA would remain neutral in Ogaden fighting. This shows that America was thinking that Somalia might not be able to keep Ogaden under it permanently.

By 10 March 1978, the whole of Ogaden was regained by Ethiopian troops after heavy casualty and loss of property to Ethiopia and Cuban troops. Nevertheless, the WSLF and Somali forces continued to attack Ethiopian towns and army camps.

Sea Outlet for Ethiopia

We have already noted in the first chapter how the colonial powers like Britain, France and Italy tried to prevent Ethiopia from having a sea outlet because without Eritrea (Assab) Ethiopia becomes a land locked country. The alternative before Ethiopian trade route is through Djibouti to which one has to pass through Ogaden.

We have already discussed how France used the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line as a bargaining instrument against Italy for having better relations with the latter.

We have seen how the United States took a lukewarm attitude on the question of sea outlet for Ethiopia in the plenary meeting of UN General Assembly session in 1950, whereas the Soviet Union gave full support to Ethiopia's claim for having a sea outlet for its trade and commerce. In this regard USSR never vacillated from its position.

In 1977 the WSLF attacked the Ogaden province of Ethiopia and the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line trying to prevent Ethiopia from having its normal trade and commerce attempting to weaken its economy.

Importance of Red Sea

We have already noted in the first chapter the strategic geopolitical importance of Red Sea, how Arab oil flows through it and whoever controls this area will control the flow of Arab oil to western powers.

We have seen how the colonial powers like Britain, France and Italy had their own economic interest to dominate the Red Sea area, thereby reducing Ethiopian influence in the Red Sea. Their move was intended to block Ethiopian outlet to sea.

In this chapter we have seen how the Arab powers with their own domestic problems like Sudan's Anyonya uprising, Egypt's anti-Soviet attitude, Saudi Arabia's desire to dominate the Red Sea including United States' desire to see continued Arab oil flow to Western countries, have coincided in their scheme to turn the Red Sea ^{into} an Arab Lake.

In this context, the existence of socialist governments in Somalia and Ethiopia made these Arab powers afraid of the fact that this socialist orientation of Ethiopia and Somalia might lead to furthering Soviet influence in the Red Sea areas might pose a threat to the Western powers' oil route. They were also afraid of the impact of the success of socialism in the Horn on the Arab feudal states.

The situation became more complex when Israel helped Ethiopia in latter's counter resistance against Somalia on Ogaden issue because Israel wanted to see the Red Sea area free

from Arab influence because Red Sea is considered as the lifeline for Israel's security, trade and commerce.

As regards the importance of Red Sea the Chairman of the PMAC of Ethiopia told the OAU Heads of States' Conference held in Gabon in July 1977:

"Using the security of the Red Sea and the secessionist movement in northern Ethiopia as a pretext, Sudan and Somalia, which are both members of the League of Arab states and the OAU, institutions which uphold the principles of non-interference and territorial integrity, have intensified their coordinated efforts to realize their divergent, yet converging hostile designs over Ethiopia."⁵⁴

US-Somalian Agreement

The conclusion of US-Somalia military agreement on 24 August 1980 which allows United States to use the air strip and port at Berbera, and ports on the east coast of Somalia, in return for \$40 million credit for defensive arms spread over two years may pose renewed threat to Ethiopia as it would strengthen Somalian hands to try to regain the Ogaden region of Ethiopia lost to latter in March 1978. The agreement was concluded inspite of opposition by two Congressional groups in

54. See Statement by Comrade, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Marian, Chairman, Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia, to The Fourteenth Assembly By Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (Libreville, Gabon, 2-5 July 1977). (Ministry of Information and National Guidance) n.d. pp. 20-21.

the USA, i.e. the Appropriation Committee, and the Africa Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who expressed concern about possible renewed Somali claim on Ogaden region of Ethiopia. A recent OAU special meeting held in Lagos also denounced the agreement.

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Conclusion

In this chapter, the issues discussed relates to the Ogaden war of 1977 and the attitude of USA and USSR towards the Ogaden region, the issue of sea outlet for Ethiopia, and the importance of Red Sea zone.

The policy of USA was to create conditions which led to an attack by a Somali-created Organisation, WSLF on the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and to a break with the Soviet Union with which Somalia had a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. The Arab powers collaborated with USA and made heavy cash payment to Somalia for launching an attack on Ethiopia. The main strategy was to turn Red Sea into Arab Lake. ^{The attack was launched at a time when} Ethiopia was busy fighting its internal problems including famine and insurgency by the displaced feudal elements.

Because ^{US} of OAU supported Ethiopia and condemned Somalia for launching an attack on Ethiopia, the USA could not take an openly hostile position. Instead it adopted overt attitude of softline on the Somalian invasion.

55. See Ian Guest, "Risks of Agreement with Somalia", Times of India, (New Delhi) 30 October 1980.

The attitude of USSR and Cuba was to try for a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Ogaden problem through Cuban proposal of a Confederation between Ethiopia and Somalia but Somalia rejected it under Arab pressure. The Soviet Union and Cuba gave military help to Ethiopia on a formal request when USA stopped military aid under cover of violation of human rights and Ethiopia was attacked by Somalia.

As regards the issue of a sea outlet for Ethiopia, we have seen that a sea outlet for Ethiopia is essential to conduct its trade and commerce. To placate Ethiopian economy the WSLF forces attacked the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line which is the only sea outlet for Ethiopia.

As regards the issue of importance of Red Sea zone, we have seen that the Western powers and Arab powers wanted to dominate the Red Sea area by instigating Somalia and WSLF to attack Ethiopia which depends on the Red Sea Zone for its trade and Commerce.

Recent developments in the horn are more disturbing. The US-Somalian Agreement signed in August 1980 offered military aid to Somalia by United States in exchange for American base at Berbera ^{which} might encourage Somalia to launch another attack on Ogaden in future because of heavy military aid by United States as stipulated in the Treaty agreement. The main motive of USA seems to dominate the Red Sea Zone through a military base at Berbera port of Somalia.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

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From the first four chapters we have studied the role of two Super Powers and their allies in regard to Ethiopia in particular and the Horn in general. In this chapter, we will like to summarize and reach conclusion regarding our opinion on this role.

Even a cursory glance at the history of Ethiopia shows that since 1840s European powers like Britain, Italy and France gradually started their imperial domination and colonization over Ethiopia under the plea of search for markets and trade, and of military protection against any other colonial power - as it happened in the times of Johannes IV and Menelik. Further, these colonial powers did not hesitate to connive with each other for their own selfish interests (although they vehemently opposed each other at other times). Thus Britain joined hands with Italy in 1881 to check French penetration into Sudan and Ethiopia, and at the same time tried to weaken Italy in its conflicts with Ethiopia.

In 1886 Italy with support from Britain, captured the port of Massawa which was recognised earlier as Ethiopian territory under an agreement between Ethiopia and Britain in 1884. In 1889 Italians forced King Menelik of Ethiopia to sign the treaty of Uccialli which recognized Italian occupation of Massawa, thereby violating the 1884 British-Ethiopian treaty. This shows the colonial and expansionist policies of the European powers.

By the treaties of 1891 and 1892 Britain had recognized Eritrea (Massawa) as part of Italy, thereby violating the 1884 treaty signed by itself with Ethiopia.

The tables were turned on Italy when it was defeated by Ethiopia in the battle of Adowa in 1896. But the treaty of Addis Ababa could not recover what was lost by the treaty of Uccialli, i.e., Eritrea was once again ceded to Italy.

In 1897 Ethiopia signed a treaty with Britain and Italy which recognized Ethiopia's right on Harrar and the region bordering British Somaliland.

In 1928 as a diplomatic move Italy signed a treaty of peace and friendship with Ethiopia, pledging that problems between them would be solved through peaceful negotiation. But Italy violated the provisions of the treaty at the slightest opportunity. It did so in 1934 in the Wal Wal incident when it intruded into Ethiopian territory. Finally Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and captured large parts of it thereby blatantly violating not only the treaty of 1928 but also violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ethiopia. The other European powers tacitly acknowledged the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.

Only the Soviet Union supported the independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia in the League of Nations in 1936. This shows how diametrically opposite were the attitudes of the socialist countries and of the western and European powers to the problems of Ethiopia in 1936.

In 1936 Italy incorporated Ethiopia as its integral part thereby violating the Tripartite Treaty of 1906, the Hague Protocol of 1925, the Italo-Ethiopian treaty of 1928, and the principles of League of Nations.

In 1942 and 1944 agreements were signed by Ethiopia and Britain ceding Eritrea and Ogeden temporarily to Britain after they were recovered from Italy during world War II. Under the plea of earlier aid to Ethiopia, Britain pressed for inclusion of Eritrea into Britain.

Britain, obviously did not learn any lesson from earlier Italian occupation of Eritrea and followed the same policy of economic and social oppression and exploitation which very much irritated the Eritreans.

Socialist countries emphasized that Eritrea should be given proper opportunity to decide its future and the foreign troops should be withdrawn from Eritrea. The General Assembly in 1950 passed a resolution suggesting the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia.

Issue of Eritrean Secession

As pointed out by a document of Ethiopian government recently, the Eritrean secessionist movement is a byproduct of colonialism. The document says:

If Eritreans would not have been severed from Ethiopia there could never have been any question of secessionism. The need was given every encouragement to grow by a deliberate policy of (a) colonial power pursued in Eritrea by

setting one group against another, especially Muslims and Christians. For example, in order to foster the antagonism between the two communities, the Italians would have churches built near mosques and vice versa... contact between the two communities was kept at the minimum, reserving certain occupations for Muslims and other for Christians. The truth, however, was that the Italians... deliberately limited the level of education that both Muslims and Christians were exposed to ... Under these circumstances, it was inevitably clear that some secessionist tendency should have manifested itself during the struggle for the decolonisation of Eritrea... 1

Since 1953, up to 1974 the United States was having very cordial relations with Ethiopia and kept it under its dominance. In 1953, it signed an agreement with Ethiopia for 25 years to build a military and surveillance base at Kagnaw (Asmara) in Ethiopia, in exchange of heavy military aid with the main motive of containing communism in the area, to replace the earlier colonial powers like Italy, Britain and France as the dominant powers in Ethiopia. USA concluded some major economic agreements with Ethiopia during 1950-73 period offering immense economic grants and loans on various irrigation and agricultural schemes.

The Soviet Union also signed agreements with Ethiopia offering economic aid, for oil exploration, gold mining etc. but only a limited amount was used by Ethiopia. This shows the limited Soviet role in 1950-73 period in Ethiopia.

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1. See Eritrea Then and Now, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press and Information Department (Addis Ababa, May 1976), p. 15. Quoted in Raman G. Bhargawaj, "Eritrean Secessionism", India Quarterly, vol.35, no.1, January-March 1979, pp. 84-85.

In 1970 it was revealed that in 1960 United States had signed a secret deal with Ethiopia promising to protect its "territorial integrity" against Eritrean Liberation Movement. This shows US support for the Haile Selassie regime.

The year 1974 acted as a great landmark in the history of Ethiopia and marked as a turning-point in its relations with the United States and Soviet Union when the regime of Haile Selassie was overthrown by a government declaring its allegiance to socialism.

The new government under the influence and strength of the "Ethiopian Revolution" of 1974 made a Nine-Point Peace Declaration in its National Democratic Revolution Programme in May 1976 for a peaceful and democratic solution of the Eritrean problem and in this context set up a commission for the implementation of the peace programme.

On the Eritrean issue, the Soviet Union had suggested a peaceful solution of the problem, especially regional autonomy of Eritrea within the sovereignty of Ethiopia, after constructive discussion between the Eritreans and Ethiopians.

The Ethiopian socialist government pointed out that only with unity can they achieve success against oppression and persecution of the past and of the Western powers. It said, "Any effort made to prevent the unity of the exploited states in their future exercise of power becomes a factor

of division which only helps the enemies of these same classes, notwithstanding what slogan they use."²

Changing Position of the United States on Eritrea

The United States which supported the proposal for creation of an Ethiopia-Eritrea Federation in the General Assembly in 1950 and gave heavy military aid to Ethiopian regime of Haile Selassie to fight against the Eritrean secessionists from 1950 onwards to 1974, took a lukewarm attitude on Ethiopian socialist government's request for military aid against the Eritrean secessionists and instead warned Ethiopia not to fight against the Muslim rebels in Eritrea because Ethiopian government refused to toe the American approach, in its foreign and domestic policies and ordered the closure of American military base at Kagnaw. Instead Western journalists were spreading false propaganda against Ethiopian government on Eritrean secessionist movement to discredit the Ethiopian government.

America was in a dilemma as to whether to continue to support Ethiopia now which is headed by a leftist government in which case the Arab powers who were supporting the Eritrean secessionists might be antagonised, if it would stop giving

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2. Support the Just Cause of the Ethiopian Peoples - A Message from the Broad Masses of Ethiopia to the Progressive and Democratic Forces of the world and All Peace-loving Peoples. (Berhena Selam Printing press), pp. 12-13.

military aid to Ethiopia, the latter might ask for Soviet help.

Changing Soviet stand on Eritrean Problem

Soviet Union resolutely supported the resolution asking for granting of independence to Eritrea in the plenary meeting of General Assembly in 1950 and held that the Eritreans should be given a free choice to determine their future.

After the Nine Point Peace Programme was announced, the Soviet Union welcomed a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem on the basis of the Programme and favoured a dialogue between the Ethiopian government and the Eritrean secessionists because it felt that the limited economic resources at the disposal of Eritreans and the Ethiopian socialist government should be spent on their economic development instead of unnecessary fighting.

Between the two super powers Soviet stand was more consistent than that of United States because Soviet Union wanted economic development of both Eritrea and Ethiopia both of which were backward and poor whereas United States was interested in playing one against the other.

The Ogaden Issue

The Ethiopian government holds that Ogaden was never under Magadasha Government, that Ogaden has since long been under Ethiopian centre of power, that Ogaden is a part of

Ethiopia because since historical times the people of Ogaden and Ethiopia ^{have} been ruled by same rulers. They have fought together against the foreign invaders particularly the British and Italian colonialism. But Somalia took advantage of the deliberate attempt of colonial powers to keep the boundaries vague and unclear in the treaties signed by Italy and Ethiopia of ⁱⁿ 1897 and 1908.

Somali claim on Ogaden was based on the fact that Ogaden had been forcibly amalgamated with Ethiopia by the colonial powers like Italy under the treaties of 1897 and 1908 and had been given back temporarily to Britain under the treaties of 1942 and 1944 to suit the purpose of the colonial powers for economic exploitation and political domination of the area.

Moreover the Somalia claim on Ogaden is unjust on the basis of:

- (1) the League of Nations and United Nations and United Nations provisions of non-interference in others' internal affairs and maintenance of territorial integrity of other countries;
- (2) the provisions of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity against any change of border inherited from the colonial powers;
- (3) the 1944 agreement between Ethiopia and Britain explicitly recognising Ethiopian sovereignty over Ogaden and
- (4) the provisions of the Memorandum submitted by Ogaden tribes appealing to the British government for their amalgamation with Ethiopia.

here it should be noted that the Arab powers like Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Iran and other powers like the United

States, Britain, West Germany, France and Pakistan, planned to draw Somalia away from its friendship with the Soviet Union as they were afraid of the radical elements both of Somalia and Ethiopia. So to prevent the radical elements from taking the upper hand they foiled the Cuban effort (to solve the Ogaden problem peacefully by formation of a confederation), and poured heavy cash to the Arab fanatics in Somalia to draw it away from the Soviet Union, and Somalia aided the "Western Somalia Liberation Front" in its attack on the Ogaden province when half of the Ethiopian troops were fighting the Eritrean secessionists and the insurgents.

The Arab countries, with their own individual problems like Egypt's anti-Soviet attitude, Sudan's internal financial crisis and the Anyonya uprising, Saudi Arabia's anti-communist stance and the desire to make the Red Sea an Arab Lake, and all together due to their fear of any impact of the radical elements of Ethiopia and Somalia over the illiterate, oppressed masses of their own countries, have used Somalian ambition of "Greater Somalia" objective as a pawn in their selfish interest, under the supervision of the United States.

The Ethiopian government has repeatedly claimed, "Although the Ethiopian people are conducting a revolutionary struggle to build a People's Democratic Republic, they are exerting efforts towards creating friendly relations and living in cooperation with all peace-loving nations on the

basis of equality and mutual respect."³ However, this attitude of the Ethiopian socialist government has very often been misunderstood as weakness and exploited by Somalia which, aided by USA and Arab powers, attacked the Ogaden province in 1977 through WSLF. Simultaneously the minority Eritrean secessionists aided by Somalia, USA and Arabs launched their attack against the Ethiopian socialist government. They overlooked that by this action they (Eritrean secessionists) and Somalia were playing into the hands of the Arab countries and the United States a role which could be described as anti-African.

The Soviet Union in 1971 tried to solve the problems between Ethiopia and Somalia peacefully because it had realised that if two socialist countries - Ethiopia and Somalia - were to fight for solution of their problems, the United States and the Arab countries would take advantage of it. And that is what precisely happened in 1977.

Soviet and Cuban Effort to Solve Problems of Ogaden, Eritree

Very often allegations have been made by Western powers that the Soviet Union wanted to dominate Ethiopia, especially through its contribution in Ethiopian victory over Somalia in 1978 and in the counter offensive to regain its lost territory of Ogaden.

But it was only after the United States stopped giving military aid to Ethiopia on the plea of violation of

3. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

human rights and on specific request from the Ethiopian government that the Soviet Union gave military aid to safeguard Ethiopia's territorial integrity for regaining Ogaden.

We have ~~have~~ also seen that through Soviet and Cuban effort in 1977 the Aden meeting was arranged to solve the problems between Ethiopia and Somalia through peaceful negotiation by creation of confederation between the two.

In 1978 Soviet Union and Cuba tried to solve the problem of Eritrea peacefully through negotiations between the two factions of Eritrean secessionists ELP and EPLF, and the Ethiopian government.

/ From the Soviet policy in the Horn it appears that Soviet interest lies in the independence of Red Sea countries particularly Ethiopia. All Soviet attempts have been to persuade the conflicting countries to negotiate among themselves and settle disputes peacefully.

Moreover, Soviet policy demands that the imperialist Arab powers should not be given any chance to make the Red Sea an Arab Lake, because by that they will try to dominate the Socialist countries of Ethiopia and Somalia and will try to liquidate the radical elements of these two countries who maybe a threat to their own feudal system.

Further, the Soviet Union respects OAU principle that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of African nations as inherited from colonial powers should be respected and any problem on this, should be solved peacefully.

On the other hand, USA even after pleading that it would not give military aid to Somalia for its invasion of Ogaden indirectly helped Somalia (through Arab powers, like Sudan Egypt and Western powers like France, Britain, West Germany) in its dream of "Greater Somalia". {This continuing interference by United States in Ethiopian affairs forced the Ethiopian government to threaten to break off relations with United States}

The Question of Ethiopia's Outlet to Sea

The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line serves as the only sea outlet for Ethiopia, thereby acting as the life-line for the Ethiopians for its imports and export trade and commerce, for transporting essential goods to Ethiopia. We have seen how the colonial powers like Italy, France and Britain tried to manipulate and obstruct Ethiopia from having proper facilities for a sea outlet by controlling the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway zone in their own interest. {The main purpose of Somalia in continuing war-like conditions in Ogaden region is to cut off Ethiopia's link and weaken its economy. This also forces Ethiopia to spend heavily on its defence budget and thus engage a large manpower in non-productive activities}.

Importance of the Red Sea

Besides, sea opening through Ogaden and Djibouti the other outlet is through Assab and Massawa in the Red Sea.

This increases the importance of Red Sea for Ethiopia. Red Sea is very strategically situated, through which oil flows to the western countries, and whoever controls the area will control the oil flow. So, the Western powers along with Arab feudal chieftains are bent upon turning the Red Sea into an Arab Lake. This is ^{also} to put the Ethiopians in difficulties because as stated above the Red Sea is an outlet for Ethiopian trade, ~~in with its long coast line.~~ Moreover, any further radicalisation of the Horn area may be a threat to the feudal Arab regime. Thus, there is a design of Arab and western powers to dislodge Ethiopian socialist government and that is why they pressurised Somalia to attack Ethiopia on the Ogaden issue.

Soviet-Ethiopian Friendship Treaty

In November 1978 Soviet Union and Ethiopia concluded a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation during a visit of Ethiopian Head of State Col. Mengistu's to Moscow.

The treaty stated that both countries would "develop and deepen the relations of unbreakable friendship and co-operation"⁵ in political, economic, trade, scientific, technical and cultural spheres.

Article 10 of the agreement stated that "in the interests of ensuring the defence capacity"⁶ of the two countries, they shall continue to cooperate in the military field.

5. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol.25, 2 February 1978, p. 29435.

6. Ibid.

In a further agreement signed in Addis Ababa in April 1979, the Soviet Union extended a low interest loan of 60,000,000 roubles to Ethiopia for agricultural development, including the repair of agricultural machinery and the construction of grain silos and cold storage plants.⁷

In September 1979, both countries signed a protocol extending technical cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery, geology, oil, gas exploration, and providing aid for the expansion of the oil refinery as at Assab towards a target of 100,000 tonnes per year.⁸

Danger of American Base in Somalia

The conclusion of US-Somalia military agreement on 24 August 1980 which allows United States to use the air strip and port at Berbera, and ports on the east coast of Somalia, in return for \$40 million credit for defensive arms spread over two years may pose renewed threat to Ethiopia as it would strengthen Somalian hands to try to capture the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. The agreement which was opposed by two Congressional groups in the USA, ie., the Appropriations Committee and the Africa Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, has also been denounced by a recent special meeting of the OAU in Lagos.⁹

7. See Keessing's Contemporary Archives, vol. 26, 4 January 1980, p. 30017.

8. Ibid., p. 30018.

9. See Ian Guest, "Risks of Agreement with Somalia", Times of India (New Delhi), 30 October 1980.

Somalia should start a dialogue for a peaceful solution of its problems with Ethiopia and then go for the economic development of the Somalians, instead of facing a new-colonial type situation by wasting its resources in purchasing arms from Western countries. It may be natural that some ethnic groups are sore at the way colonial boundaries were drawn, cutting across their ethnic and other cementing factors. But their playing into the hands of big powers will weaken them economically which they should avoid at all cost and try to negotiate issues. If this is not done, the Horn will remain a play ground for the big powers particularly western powers who have heavy ^{stakes} ~~status~~ in the Arab oil.

It is to be seen in future how far the aid from the socialist countries and others is used for the welfare of the people and how far it is helpful to the economic betterment of the people of the area, i.e., Horn of Africa, especially people of Ethiopia.

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