

The African Horn:

British Cold War Scenario

The Ethiopian government has exposed the key British role in the efforts to set up a Soviet-U.S. confrontation in the Horn of Africa. An Ethiopian Foreign Ministry delegation on Jan. 18 delivered, to British Foreign Secretary David Owen, a government statement that Britain "was the original source of the fantasy of Greater Somalia." The exposure of the British origins, and manipulations, of the myth that areas of neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti should be part of Somalia — ostensibly since these regions are inhabited by Somali speaking tribes — puts the blame for the rigging of a U.S.-Soviet showdown right where it belongs.

Countless press stories have been building up the atmosphere of confrontation, claiming that there are thousands of Cubans and Soviet military personnel in Ethiopia, and also claiming the existence of a continual Soviet airlift to bring in arms. The London *Observer* predicted this would be "the grimmest war since Vietnam." The stories are also projecting a retaliatory Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, citing Somali claims to that effect, in an attempt to justify moves by the West to come to the aid of the invading Somalis.

Just prior to meeting the Ethiopian delegation, David Owen told the British parliament, "We will consider the request (from Somalia for arms) carefully in consultation with our allies." The Ethiopian statement, however, denounced British and Carter Administration intervention into the crisis on the side of Somalia as fraudulent concern. "If the United Kingdom and the United States were to stand for justice," the statement charged, "they should have come out without any hesitation or reservation and condemned the Somali aggressors."

Despite this warning, and continued Ethiopian denials of plans to invade Somalia, the British *Guardian* in a Jan. 24 editorial called explicitly for a Cuba-missile style crisis with the Soviets in the Horn

In contrast to the crisis mongering by Owen, by the Carter Administration, and by the press, European diplomatic sources maintain that Ethiopia is acting in its legitimate national interests. A West German diplomat reported that the Cuban and Soviet presence is viewed as a stabilizing factor, since it will ensure that the Ethiopians will not be provoked into a counter-invasion of Somalia for revenge.

Britain's attempt to provoke a U.S.-USSR confrontation in the Horn of Africa is based on long-standing political-economic manipulation in the area. Following is a brief outline of Britain's historic role in the Horn:

* *early 1880s* — the British facilitated the Italian occupation of the coastal Ethiopian province of Eritrea, as well as part of Somalia, favoring weak Italian presence over a much more powerful France. Britain took over the

rest of Somalia, and also controlled the port of Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea.

* *1934-36* — Mussolini conquers Ethiopia. Mussolini's action was recognized by Britain, but not by the U.S.

* *early 1940s* — Haile Selassie decides to collaborate with the U.S.

* *1943* — British begin propagating the Greater Somali myth by setting up the Somali League for that purpose.

* *1943* — Churchill gets wind of a secret Roosevelt-Selassie meeting in the Suez following the Yalta Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin summit, panics, arranges a secret meeting in Cairo with Selassie, and gives him a Rolls-Royce in a vain effort to win him from the Americans.

* *late 1950s* — British start up the anti-government rebellion in Eritrea, an area occupied by them following World War II, to destabilize the region.

* *1960* — upon the independence of Somalia, the Greater Somalia myth is incorporated into the official ideology of Somalia.

* *1969* — Ethiopia and Somalia attempt to resolve differences and set up normal relations. Somali president Shermarke is assassinated while Prime Minister Egal is on a visit to Washington for discussions with the Nixon Administration. Attempts to fill Shermarke's position with a like-minded replacement was met with a coup d'état by the head of the army, Siad Barre. The coup was organized on the basis of the Greater Somalia myth.

* *1977* — war waged by Somalia against Ethiopia instigated by Brzezinski and other British-linked members of the Carter Administration, on the basis of the Greater Somalia myth.

International Press Foments New 'Missile Crisis'

Following is a sampling of press efforts to blow the African Horn into a major international crisis:

The Guardian, Jan. 24:

...no Western government with an interest in the Middle East or the Indian Ocean can for long regard the growing Russian presence in Ethiopia only as support for a client in difficulties. In combination with the control of South Yemen it gives the Russians an excessive power, should they choose to exercise it, over the Red Sea and the shipping lanes to the Gulf. It can be argued that whereas at one time this would have been a vital threat to western interests it is no longer credible to that degree, because the result of using it would be a world war...

...a policy of support for the OAU's attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement must be linked with a clear set of questions to the Russians about what they are doing in Ethiopia (and South Yemen) and how long they propose to stay. If the answers are unsatisfactory there could be a serious crisis, as there was when the Russians tried to put missiles into Cuba.

The Daily Telegraph, Jan. 30:

*Russia's Ethiopia Gamble Could Be
Carter's Big Test*

The Ogaden war could confront (Carter's) year-old administration with its first full-blown international crisis this spring.

For an Ethiopian victory could give Russia a stranglehold on the Red Sea and consolidate the naval and air bases it needs to dominate oil tanker routes from the Persian Gulf around Africa....

A senior White House official, referring to the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty talks said: "The Soviets have to know that there'll be no chance whatever of senate ratification of SALT II, even supposing we get that far in the current negotiations, if the climate of public opinion here hardens against them."

...Mr. Zbigniew Brzezinski told the Ponomarev delegation that they could either work with the West for a new world order...or go back to the old Cold War contest with all the risks that would imply.

The problem...is, quite simply that the Somalis are technically the aggressors.

The danger is that by holding off (from intervention until Ethiopia has actually invaded Somalia) America will be seen by various African states as what the Chinese call "a paper tiger."

The opinion would be shared in the Middle East...with profoundly destabilizing consequences. The Russians and Cubans would emerge ten-foot tall.

Pentagon strategists...tend to think that Russia is deliberately testing Mr. Carter's nerve and that he may face a crisis as difficult as President Kennedy's over the Cuba missiles in 1962.

In short, if its Ethiopian gamble pays off, Russia could more than regain all the ground it has lost diplomatically in the Middle East since 1973-74.

Christian Science Monitor, Jan. 26:

The United States, for its part, needs to weigh a more effective approach to the Soviet Union....the time has perhaps come to make plain to Moscow more forcefully that its blatant intervention in Ethiopia and Africa generally will have adverse consequences on current efforts to give detente another head of steam.

The Observer, London, Jan. 22:

The Horn of Africa now appears to be only a few weeks away from what Western and Arab intelligence sources say is likely to be the "grimmiest" war since Vietnam.

W. German Minister: No Arms To Areas Of Tension

The Ethiopian government on Jan. 22 gave the West German government 24 hours to withdraw German Ambassador Lankes from the country, and followed this demand with a highly unusual statement charging that Lankes was impeding the establishment of good relations between the two countries.

The Ethiopian statement was blacked out in nearly all of the Western press, while U.S. press and wire services were conducting a fabricated story that Ethiopia had kicked out Lankes because of German aid to Somalia.

Following is West German Federal Foreign Minister Genscher's reiteration that aid to Somalia prohibits arms spending, appearing in a Frankfurt daily article:

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Jan. 24:
*Ethiopia Wants To Maintain
Its Relations To Bonn*

Bonn, Jan. 23. Federal Foreign Minister Genscher has emphatically stated that it is a principle of the Federal Government that no weapons will be supplied to areas of tension. This policy holds in equal measure for direct and indirect arms supplies. In a speech at a dinner on Monday on the occasion of the state visit of President Bongo from Gabon, Genscher made a direct connection between this principle and the latest financial aid to Somalia. He said that in this case too there is no doubt about the stipulation, that the 25 million DM that Bonn has granted Somalia cannot be allowed to be spent for the purchase of weapons....

On Monday Dr. Haile Gabriel Dagne, the Ethiopian Ambassador to the Federal Republic, appealed to the

Federal government that material which has been "created by German sweat" cannot be allowed to be used for the destruction of his country. Dagne told journalists that the Ethiopian government learned to its great astonishment that the Federal Government allegedly wanted to finance Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia with many millions of marks. The news that Somalia has been promised development aid credits without any conditions can nevertheless at this time not be directly interpreted as the reason for the expulsion of Ambassador Lankes. To begin with, the Ethiopian government is expecting detailed explanations from Bonn about the promises to Somalia. The traditionally good relations between both countries should be maintained. Dagne first of all based the expulsion of the German Ambassador on the fact that his conduct in Addis Ababa was not likely to fulfill the Ethiopian government's desire for intensified relations. Addis Ababa has a reason to assume that Lankes had not correctly reported on the goals of Ethiopian politics. It is conceivable that the current affair could be cleared up as an "episode" by a change in individuals.

Ambassador Dagne explained Ethiopian policy by saying that his government up to now has undertaken the successful task of changing the country from a feudal state into a modern social state through an independent foreign policy and nonalignment. Ethiopia wants to develop in peace. However, the impression has arisen in the Federal Republic and in some of its western partners too, that Ethiopia is an aggressor. In reality, the country has been attacked by Somalia.