

State Department-Moscow deals will bring genocide to Horn of Africa

by Mark Burdman

During late April and early May, London has been the scene of intensive diplomatic discussions about African regional crisis spots. On April 28-29, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister with responsibility for Africa Anatoly Adamishin were huddled in talks concerning the Horn of Africa, Namibia, and Angola. As they were meeting, the British Foreign Office announced that talks on Angola would be held at a secret location in London May 3-4, involving the United States, Cuba, South Africa, and the Angolan government.

The Soviets, while not one of the parties named in the latter talks, have fully endorsed the discussions, and are attending in an "observer" capacity. Adamishin stated April 29, "After the positive achievement over Afghanistan at the Geneva talks, we have a dynamic for working toward the political settlement of the South African question, both in Namibia as well as Angola."

That statement alone should be a tip-off that the West is about to suffer a diplomatic fiasco à la Afghanistan under the propaganda cover of a "Soviet retreat." But it is the talks over Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa which even more clearly show the cynicism, absurdity, and murderousness of State Department wheelings-and-dealings with the Russians over Third World "regional crisis" spots. These discussions are providing a convenient framework for the Soviets to strengthen their presence in the Horn of Africa and for malthusian policy-planners, East and West, to carry out their plan for the radical reduction of the population of Africa.

As the Crocker-Adamishin talks were taking place, the regional wars in the Horn of Africa were significantly heating up, and European press accounts warned that as many as 9 million lives are immediately threatened by the fighting and by the disruption of international food-relief efforts in the area.

Another Afghanistan?

During the week of April 18, while in Geneva for meetings with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz announced that "famine in Ethiopia" would be one subject of discussion between President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachov in Moscow in May. Shultz suggested that Ethiopia be declared one of the "local conflicts" to be discussed by the superpowers, first at

preparatory meetings of experts from both countries. Then, on April 26, State Department spokesman Charles Redman declared that Ethiopia would be placed at the top of the agenda in the Crocker-Adamishin talks in London, superseding Namibia and Angola.

Adamishin himself had spent much of April in the Horn of Africa, visiting Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Somalia.

An informed British source reports that the Soviets are putting out the line, through diplomatic and other channels, that they are "absolutely seeing Ethiopia in the same light as they saw Afghanistan," claiming that they want to disengage from the area. One pro-Gorbachov source in Paris said, in a May 4 discussion, "the nature of the deal in the Horn of Africa is for the superpowers to get out. This is very much in line with U.S. policy, dictated by budgetary restraints. But it is also Soviet policy. They want to deal with all this regional crisis nonsense through the United Nations, to strengthen the U.N., and to manage crises with the Americans, but also with the other powers, Britain, China, France, etc."

At least on the U.S. side, there are signs of disengagement from the Horn of Africa. In recent months, the United States has systematically cut back aid to Somalia, which had been seen by the U.S. government as an ally since Somalia's mid-1970s shift away from the Russians.

An informed French source told this correspondent May 4, "The Soviets will hardly let Ethiopia be controlled by other hands. They have a very important base there, it is a very important country, and the most powerful state for them in Africa." What might happen, he reported, is the political demise of Ethiopian dictator Mengistu, if the Ethiopian army's planned drive against northern rebels during the next weeks fails. But that, he said, would not necessarily displease Moscow, "There are leaders of the Ethiopian ruling party central committee, who are more in favor of Moscow than even Mengistu."

In February, he reported, Mengistu took such a beating in a battle with northern rebels, that high-ranking officers in the city of Asmara revolted. At the same time, he noted, at least one significant liberation movement among the Eritreans in the north, the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF), is reported to be getting most of its outside aid from the Soviets, either directly from the U.S.S.R. or through Syria. It is not to be excluded that the Soviets could have

intentionally arranged for Mengistu's embarrassment.

Now, if he falls, or is toppled, the Western media might have a field day portraying a Soviet loss, while the Soviets actually consolidate on the ground. The Soviet embassy in Addis Ababa is one of the most high-powered in Africa, and anybody looking at a map will see that Ethiopia's position near the Persian Gulf makes it crucial for Soviet strategy in that region.

'Like Treblinka'

The immediate threat is that there will be a bloodbath in Ethiopia, licensed by the superpowers.

In early April, Ethiopia and Somalia suddenly ended a 13-year border conflict. Reports are that this deal was supported, behind-the-scenes, by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The effect was to free up Ethiopian army units from responsibilities on the Somalia border, for action in the north. A similar border deal between Ethiopia and Sudan is reportedly in the making, which would free up yet more troops for the northern military action.

Throughout the entire month of April, Mengistu made one bloodcurdling speech after another, denouncing the Eritreans and Tigreans as "bandits," exactly the denunciation used by Afghan dictator Najibullah against the Afghan resistance. The Ethiopian government-controlled media has been raving on about a coming counteroffensive into the north, and convoys of trucks and troops, including teenagers, have been flowing northward.

Whether Mengistu's heralded military drive against the rebels will actually get off the ground, the effect of all this already has been to throttle food-relief efforts. Even before April-May, the Eritrean and Tigrean rebel leaderships had been blocking relief convoys into the region; earlier, the combination of rebel *and* central government obstruction of anti-locust efforts in 1986, had prevented eradication of that special breed of "pilgrim locust" which is now threatening large parts of Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, and the Mediterranean.

In early April, as Mengistu prepared for his offensive, his first decision was to eject all international relief agencies from Ethiopia. According to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* May 1, Mengistu has blocked, in the port of Assab, 100,000 tons of cereal, which have begun to rot. "Seven million people in the area of the north, Eritrea and Tigre, are already in bad shape, and risk starvation," the paper notes, adding that hundreds of thousands of refugees are flowing into Sudan. The International Red Cross is labeling the situation "catastrophic." All food aid has moved into the hands of the government, and informed diplomatic circuits are claiming that Mengistu has been diverting international food aid to feed his army. In the middle of this, *Corriere* notes, the United Nations bureau in Addis Ababa called on Italy, the other countries of Western Europe, and the United States, to stop sending food aid to Ethiopia, since "we do not know

what to do with it!"

At least two bills are pending in the U.S. House of Representatives for cutting off food aid to Ethiopia.

In parallel to the atrocities in Ethiopia, horrifying stories are coming out of Sudan, where the central government has also been stepping up war against rebels, in this case Christian-animists, in the south of the country. Amazingly enough, survivors of the massacres of the south are streaming, at the rate of 10,000 a month, into western Ethiopia, at the same time that northern Ethiopian refugees are streaming into northern Sudan! The *Sunday Times* of London May 1 reports that the southern Sudanese refugees reaching Ethiopia look like "walking skeletons." One Christian missionary described the scene in one camp as "like Treblinka," and a Western diplomat said that refugees in two others camps looked "worse than Nazi concentration camp victims."

European press estimates are that up to 2 million are threatened with death by starvation in Sudan.

There is no question that there is a conscious policy of malthusians, East and West, to depopulate the Horn of Africa, which has been, relatively speaking, one of Africa's most populous regions. Expanding Horn of Africa crises could also spill over into Egypt to the north and Kenya and war-torn Uganda, to the south and southwest.

Sudan's case was high on the agenda of a meeting of the arch-malthusian Inter-Action Council of Former World Leaders, chaired by Helmut Schmidt, in Harare, Zimbabwe on March 19-21. The Council decided on the formation of an international mediation effort by Inter-Action for Sudan, under former Nigerian leader General Obasanjo. Prior to the Zimbabwe meeting, Obasanjo had been in Cuba, then in Washington, to discuss his role in mediation efforts both in Angola and in Sudan.

The "Sudan initiative" of the Inter-Action Council will be discussed at the Moscow meeting of the Council, on May 16-19 of this year. Inter-Action leaders have been quite explicit in supporting any measures that could lower population in Africa. Why not, to this end, enlist the Russians in expanded regional wars throughout the continent?

The Russians signaled their interest in an article in the April 1988 edition of the Soviet magazine *New Times* praising Canadian energy magnate Maurice Strong, recently elected president of the World Federation of United Nations Associations. *New Times* praised a plan circulated by Strong for creating a "global security system" that would "function most effectively on the basis of the U.N. Charter and within the U.N. framework. . . . He proposes that a commission on global security and multilateral cooperation be set up under the aegis of the World Federation of United Nations Associations." This commission would be composed of "outstanding representatives of different countries with vast experience in politics, economics, public relations, science and military, and other fields." *New Times* comments that Strong's plan is "welcomed in Moscow."