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AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

(The following thoughts have been provoked by the Reston column in last Sunday's [15 January] New York Times and other rumblings.)

I. How the Ethiopians, Somalis, Russians, Cubans, US and others got into this thing.

The Ethiopian revolution that began in February 1974 was not plotted by anybody in particular, although it had been long heralded. If a finger of blame needs to be pointed, it could as well be pointed at the US, which by its various assistance programs and particularly by its association over a period of years with the Ethiopian military program in effect encouraged at least three different sets of expectations among the Ethiopian elite:

- that if Ethiopians were ever to emulate the kind of effective government and administration evoked by American example and exhortation, drastic political change would be required;
- that while the army, as the group at the cutting edge of modernization and the group that had a monopoly of force, would have to lead the way to drastic change, real freedom could come only from within the civilian elite, which would be called upon to take over and apply the skills and ideas that its members had been learning in the US, Western Europe, and the USSR;
- that the US, which had sustained the Imperial regime for so many years, which by advice and counsel had assisted the Emperor to defend himself (and his country) against enemies foreign and

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domestic, would turn out to be at best a drag on radical change (the view of the so-called moderates, now dead or in exile) and at worst actively hostile to radical change because of "objective historical relationships" (the view of the Ethiopian Marxists and other ideologues).

When the revolution actually came, and it came somewhat gradually (Haile Selassie ~~was kept around~~ ^{not formally deposed} until September 1974), quite a varied assortment of Ethiopian elite, and some not-so-elite, "came to the party." Each group had its own set of expectations as to what the revolution was about, and its own set of values and programs to which it gave priority. Not surprisingly, the more militantly ruthless have proceeded to impose their definition of the meaning and direction of the Ethiopian revolution upon the other groups. The moderates, as noted above, have vanished at least for the time being; the radical students and teachers have been driven either underground into the EPRP or uneasily co-opted into the various civil organs of the revolution; the top leadership has narrowed down to a maximum leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, part Galla and thus almost a typical outsider turned insider (Bonaparte the Corsican and Hitler the Grenzmensch are other examples of the type), surrounded by a "council" of fellow soldiers who ^{function} ~~live~~ in an atmosphere compounded ^{of} by enthusiasm and fear.

The attitudes of the Ethiopian revolutionaries toward the United States had self-fulfilling prophecy as their central characteristic. They expected opposition, even counter-plotting, from the US, and their expectations and suspicions tended to produce, on the American side, attitudes, especially

at higher levels, that the Ethiopians interpreted as confirming these expectations. What seemed in Washington to be proper caution, and even a degree of humility, in dealing with a fluid situation and a changing cast of characters, was interpreted in Addis Ababa as indifference bordering on outright hostility. Our refusal, through most of 1976, to agree to supply or even to answer the Ethiopians' rather curt demands for additional military equipment to counter, as they claimed, the growing menace from Somalia, put the headstone on an expiring relationship. And not to the Ethiopians' surprise, either; our chargé got in to see Mengistu only after the essential deal with the Soviets had been consummated, and I suspect that this gesture was made at Soviet urging -- after all, there was always a chance of a few things still in the pipeline, rather than because the Ethiopian leader had any real hope of results.

With this set of attitudes and expectations, the Ethiopians turned to the "socialist states." The Soviets, far from leaping at this opportunity to do the US in the eye (or the horn), reacted with considerable (though hardly commendable) caution. No more than Washington did Moscow want to associate itself with men who were not there to stay, whose ideological credentials were suspect whatever their professions (Sadat too was once an ~~Arab~~ socialist), who had not, from the Soviet standpoint, finally broken their country's ties with the non-communist world and who even at times showed interest in Moscow's Chinese competitor. Moreover, the Soviets were well aware that a relationship with Ethiopia could cost them their facilities in Somalia and the position there on which they had expended

some fair amount of hardware and psychic investment.

In the end, the attraction was too strong; the provision of relatively modest quantities of assistance through Eastern Europeans did not promise to produce the quality of relationship that the situation seemed to require; the possibility that the Soviet Union would be perceived to be either half-hearted or, worse yet, ineffective in coming to the defense of a socialist revolution was more than the men in the Kremlin could tolerate. The decision was certainly made easier by Mengistu's demonstrations of toughness, by signs of unreliability already coming from Siad in Mogadiscio, and by general shifts in the constellations of Middle Eastern politics. There were, in short, fewer reasons not to move to help the Ethiopians in the main way they wanted help in late 1976 -- provision of arms; and there were a number of reasons, though hardly compelling and probably including Soviet distrust of new men in Washington, to go ahead with a fairly orthodox military aid program, the Muscovite house specialty in dealing with the Third World.

The conclusion of the Ethiopian-Soviet arms deal, and more particularly its magnitude once this became known, pushed the Somalis over the edge. They began a campaign to secure their rear as best they could by letting it be known in various ways that their Soviet relationships were unsatisfactory and that they would welcome new friends, while they began to crank up their guerrilla assets in the Ogaden and to prepare their own Soviet-modelled military machine to support the Western Somali Liberation Front's "uprising" against the Ethiopian oppressors. They reasoned that they must strike before

Soviet arms reached Ethiopia. Two somewhat fortuitous developments made their decision to attack more attractive: the Djibouti question had been eased for ^{the Somalis} them by a switch in French policy that in effect gave pro-Somali elements the dominant position in the post-independence government there; and the United States, pursuing a new policy of showing that "progressive socialism" was not a bar to useful relations with Third World and especially African states, entered negotiations with Siad which culminated in a statement that the US had agreed, in principle, to provide Somalia with "defensive" weapons. With some considerable initial success, the Somalis portrayed this statement as a diplomatic revolution that had brought them a new, powerful friend and a range of local allies stretching from the Sudan through Egypt to Saudi Arabia, Iran, and even Pakistan.

The war the Somalis began late in the spring of 1977 was carefully tailored to their resources. The guerrillas led the attacks; Somali regular forces with air support, armor and artillery moved to back up the guerrillas as this became necessary; and the campaign has been fought in a series of spasms controlled by the primitive character of the Somalis' logistic system. Nonetheless, the Somalis appeared as a well-oiled machine in comparison with an Ethiopian army whose leadership had been decimated and demoralized by political purges and by years of fruitless counterinsurgency efforts in Eritrea. While it was not a lightning way, by August the Somalis felt confident enough to assert that they would have captured Harar and Dire-dawa, the keys to any hope of an early Ethiopian riposte, within a month or little more (subsequently by the end of 1977, and though neither city is taken

yet, Somali prospects are still not quite out of the question).

On the Ethiopian side, Soviet materiel had been arriving in quantity, by sea, since early spring, but it was clear by the end of summer that supplies in themselves were not going to keep the Ethiopian army from defeat. Moscow was faced with the prospect of having backed a lower^{5/}, and at the cost of sacrificing the Soviet Navy's Berbera facilities in the bargain. Many aspects of the early Angola period began to have parallels in the Horn, and the Soviet response was similar: get a high-level military mission there to shape up the Ethiopians as fast as possible and determine, on the spot, what was needed; get the Cubans in; and bring the needful by the fastest available means, in this case, as in Angola, an airlift. I feel very strongly that the Soviet motive here has been primarily to ~~avoid~~^{avoid} disaster, even though the ^{positive} prospect of a longer-term strategic success in Africa was a fundamental consideration at the outset. I doubt that the idea of "replacing the US" was a major consideration, although it was surely one of the attractions, and I am strongly skeptical that the airlift was viewed in Moscow as a banner-waving "challenge" to the US. These concepts sound more like Washington putting on its white hat and beginning to believe its own propaganda. Whether the Horn affair may come to be perceived in this light by Muscovites, Washingtonians and others is another issue; I argue that it didn't start that way.

Still another issue is the Cuban intervention. It seems to me that by this time it should be clear to almost everyone that the Castro regime means what it says and takes very seriously the obligation it feels to come to the aid of socialist movements and revolutions, especially those in the Third World, which appear to be threatened. Shifts in Cuban policy in this matter

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are illusory; what one really sees are tactical adjustments to the "objective" situation, but the policy, which is rooted ultimately in the sense of "solidarity" that has been part of the socialist ethos since the early nineteenth century, is constant. Nor are the Cubans "for hire" by the Soviets. Obviously, Cuban interventions abroad are in a practical sense dependent on Soviet support, and they cannot be undertaken outside the Western Hemisphere without Soviet agreement, inspiration, and the closest collaboration. But the Cubans are there because Castro and his leadership want them there, not because the Soviets have told them they have to be there. Thus, the Cuban presence in Ethiopia is indeed one of Havana's challenges to the capitalist world order, of which the US is the leader, but it is probably not, except in this general but still important sense, ^{a carefully chosen} ~~another~~ defi against Cuba's giant northern neighbor.

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II. Where does this mess go from here?

[It is my own suspicion that the shape of the clouds one sees in a crystal ball is largely determined by one's own values, preoccupations, and intellectual habits. The future is much more in the eye of the beholder than in the "facts." My own prejudice is in the direction of "life goes on" rather than toward a sense of international trauma, and my constructions are likely therefore to emphasize the elements of continuity and irony in any given situation rather than what another observer is likely to see as the dramatically new. The reader has been warned.]

There are, I believe, a number of relatively constant factors in the present "mess" in the Horn of Africa; whatever scenario is spun out for the Ethiopians, Somalis, and the people involved with their problems, needs to take account of these constants. Moving from the local to the global, I see them as follows:

-- Ethiopian nationalism is gradually opening out from being the exclusive sentiment of a dominant Amhara aristocracy, and as it does so it is intensifying, certainly as it applies to traditional local enemies, but more especially as it makes foreigners generally objects of distrust and disdain. Any successful accomplishments, military or economic or simply organizational, of the Ethiopian revolution will be interpreted and touted as Ethiopian achievements, with quite modest credit given to international socialism.

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- Somali nationalist irridentism is a fixture of Horn politics for an indefinite time to come, and the fissiparous tendencies of Somalia's clan-ridden society will be subordinated to irridentist, anti-foreign sentiments. The younger, foreign educated generation of Somali leaders is even more dedicated to these sentiments than their elders, and the only solvent for these attitudes would be the achievement of Greater Somalia.
- Eritrean insurgency is basically a product of the resistance of predominantly Muslim lowlanders to highland Christian domination: Ethiopian nationalism cannot admit defeat at the hands of such people, but neither can the Ethiopians impose themselves on such recalcitrant human material. Therefore the Eritrean insurgency will continue indefinitely, much as the Scottish border wars against the English persisted for so many centuries. Therefore, too, there will be a standing invitation for foreigners to meddle, either constructively by advice and mediation, or destructively through the clandestine support of the Eritreans against Ethiopia or of one or more of the Eritrean groups against the others.
- The international energy problem, focused on petroleum supply, will be with us indefinitely, and it is not possible to foresee a time when the Arabian Peninsula, across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, will not be a major element in the energy problem and therefore by geographical proximity a factor to some degree

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in calculations about the Horn. But the temptation to exaggerate the impact of events in the Horn on the energy problem should be resisted. The fact is that the heart of the energy problem lies (aside from the question of physical availability) in the grinding, frustrating process of shifting the balance in the relationships between the major energy producers and the major consumers. Compared to the upheavals and tremors produced in international society by these basic shifts, the impact of events in the Horn must be very marginal, even though they may at times seem important to actual negotiators trying to sell a scheme or make a point.

- Detente divisible or indivisible, the USSR will continue to seek, probably in company with Cuba and certainly in competition with China, opportunities to support socialist revolutions and revolutionary regimes as well as popular liberation struggles in the Horn, in Africa generally, and in the Arab states if opportunities present themselves there. This kind of activity is so deeply embedded as part of the Soviet secular religion that there is no prospect that it will be constrained seriously for any significant period of time by anything other than the "objective situation."
- The USSR will continue to try to sustain and make visible its great power status by seeking points d'appui in Africa and adjacent areas (South Yemen, for example). Demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, even if accomplished by agreement, would be followed by other forms of Soviet effort (fishing harbors,

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oceanic experiment stations, space support facilities, for example). Soviet competition in this region is here to stay, and it cannot and will not be divorced from the socialist revolution factor discussed above. Anything less would be an abandonment of the privileges of great power status.

With these constants in the background, my hunch is that the situation in the Horn could evolve in ways that certainly are not especially favorable to American interests, but also do not do them traumatic damage.

The Ethiopians will prevail militarily against the Somalis, driving the latter back inside their own frontier, at least in the critical northern area, but the job will take longer and be more costly than the Ethiopians now think. Both the Ethiopians and the Cubans (whose combat help the Ethiopians will not wish to admit even to themselves and which they will dispense with at the earliest opportunity) will find the Somali regulars and irregulars fairly tough customers and, as they advance, will also be harried by an unfriendly local population in an unfriendly physical environment. Even with Cuban help, the Ethiopians' logistics are likely to be a good deal less than fully satisfactory, and the fresher Ethiopian troops will not make up in enthusiasm what they will surely lack in training if the offensive is undertaken early on.

The Ethiopians will pause, for both political and military reasons, at or near the Somali border, and this pause will be seconded by advice from the Soviets, although it will be impossible to get Moscow to promise this in advance except at a price the US would not pay, such as bringing the Soviets into the Middle Eastern negotiations. An offer to the Somalis to negotiate

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a new demarcation of the frontier will likely be made; the Somalis will demand not only border negotiations but arrangements for autonomy for the Ogaden; a cease-fire punctuated by continuing incidents will ensue, as the Ethiopians unilaterally proclaim that all the inhabitants of their country have the same free status, and point to the 1976 charter to prove it. International backing for these negotiations will be forthcoming, but it will not be ardent once the cease-fire is arranged. There is even a chance for some kind of African/Arab UNEF-type ^{presence} ~~arrangement~~, powerless in fact but vaguely symbolic of international concern that the situation not be allowed to get out of hand again. No definitive agreement will be reached, and the stars will remain the same in the Somali flag.

Cuban combat forces will either be withdrawn from Ethiopia or transformed into an oversize Cuban MAAG, as the Soviets continue to provide equipment, training in the USSR, and good advice. The advice will become gradually less welcome, because it will probably include suggestions for an autonomist resolution of both the Ogaden and the Eritrean problems, and the Ethiopians are not likely to accept this. A further evolution in the USSR's relations with Somalia (more on this below) is also likely to produce some cooler atmosphere between socialist Ethiopia and the USSR, although this will not much affect either the general distaste with which the Ethiopian leadership looks at the US nor the relative warmth of its relations with Eastern Europeans. The Ethiopians will attempt to play the Cubans off against the Soviets; this attempt will not succeed, and at some point the Cuban presence will dwindle.

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The Ethiopians are not Angolans; rightly or wrongly they will think they are able to resume basic direction of their own show at the earliest possible moment, but this moment cannot be hastened from outside although it can be delayed by Arab or Western hanky-panky in Eritrea or with the Ethiopian conservatives roosting in Khartoum. The Ethiopian revolution will proceed, gradually taking on an African pace as bureaucracy overcomes militancy. A very gradual resumption of economic and even of economic aid relationships with the US is a good possibility after some time.

The Somalis will be embittered and blame their defeat, always regarded by them as temporary, on the failure of the US and the Arabs to come to their aid. They will resume contact with the USSR, first in hope that the Soviets can be persuaded to bring the Ethiopians to offer better terms, and then in a kind of fit of Titoism -- insisting that they hold basic socialist credentials, of a special Somali variety, and therefore are to be counted among the deserving socialist poor. The Soviets will not have the assets to install a really pro-Soviet regime in Mogadiscio, but Soviet port calls in Somali ports will quietly resume, some spare parts for leftover Soviet equipment will be provided, and some of the economic aid relationships will be repaired. At the same time, the Somalis will be thinking still of another round in the Ogaden, however distant the prospect, and will not allow their disappointment with the US to cut them off from all possibilities of US and conservative Arab help. So the US will have an opening, although it may not wish to put much effort into exploiting it. [REDACTED] will continue to view Siad (or some very similar successor if Siad should be made scapegoat

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for failure in the Ogaden) with a wary eye, and the Somalis' continuing relations with communist countries will not help them overcome conservative suspicions.

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On the whole, the attitudes of other Arab States toward developments of the kind I am describing would be relief that a great power confrontation had been avoided, and they would feel free to resume the kinds of postures and activities with regard to Eritrea that are already familiar to them: support, but not too much support, for Eritrean claims to autonomy/independence through the provision of weapons and money. Since the Libyans would, in all probability, continue to pursue their grand design of overthrowing Nimeiri and Sadat and therefore wish to continue to cultivate the Ethiopian progressives, support for the Eritreans would come largely from the Sudanese and the Saudis. Syrians, Iraqis, and others are likely to be preoccupied with the

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The Soviet presence in Ethiopia has certainly disturbed leaders of other African countries, even I suspect those who count themselves as associated with the socialist camp. But the focus of the anxiety, as I see it, is more on what kind of response that presence provokes from the US than it is on the Soviets per se. The outcome I have described above would be optimum from the standpoint of virtually all of them, since it would have at least the appearance of returning the situation to something like the status quo ante, and have the further benefits of adding Somalis to the more non-aligned, preserving the principle of the inviolability of their European-drawn frontiers, and bringing Siad, whom nobody much likes, down several pegs. Those Africans who like to think of themselves as covered by a Western blanket, beneath which they enjoy more intimate relationships -- especially with the French, can attribute Soviet/Ethiopian "restraint" to the Soviets' respect for American and Western European opposition to Moscow's ambitions. Those whose spirits tend to move in higher realms can argue that common African attitudes were responsible, even if the OAU was helpless as an organization. This argument will be somewhat more believable if Nigeria and others do play some small role in arranging a ceasefire. But, in the end, the Horn affairs will be perceived as another lucky escape for Africa from the

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perils of great power rivalry, even though a Soviet and Cuban presence remains in Ethiopia and is to some extent re-established in Somalia.

The effect on the USSR of the outcome I have described could be more serious. It would, I imagine, encourage the Soviet leadership considerably -- something had gone right, for once, and in Africa, too. They might well approach the problems of southern Africa with more confidence, push harder for an even more prominent role in the Zimbabwe liberation movements and generally encourage people like Nkomo to stick to a harder line, assuming that Smith has not brought about an arrangement in Rhodesia by the time the Ethiopia-Somalia war stops. They might even be encouraged, especially if the Cubans felt similarly, to take the Angola situation more firmly in hand and campaign seriously for pacification of the Angolan hinterland while making sure that the Angolans finally reject any deal with South Africa to keep out of Namibia. These steps, it seems to me, rather than developments in the Horn, would contribute, if they took them, to enhance the Soviets' image and offering them opportunities for a more positive (from their standpoint) role in Black Africa. And this, in turn, as and when it occurred, might indeed frighten and impress African leaders in new ways. It is thus in this arena, I believe, rather than in the Horn directly, that US interests might come to be threatened more seriously than they are currently, and where it is possible to suffer a loss of initiative which could have some of the consequences that Ambassador Young and others have foreseen arising out of the situations in southern Africa. But whether these effects would become actualities would depend much more on the course and activity of US policy in Africa generally than ~~they would~~ on the more specific "outcome" in the Horn. In other words, as

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I see it, the Horn is a sideshow, and it's really up to us whether we permit that sideshow, on which we are likely to have minimal influence, to affect to our detriment the atmosphere in the main ring. This certainly will happen if we ourselves port^{ry} the sideshow as the centerpiece of the African or any other circus.

III. What if?

The possibilities outlined in Part II of this opus are relatively sane and unimaginative. What are some of the more exciting visions? It seems to me there are at least three, none of which are too far out of bounds.

One, the least probably^{ly} in my view, is that the Soviets and Cubans are overwhelmed by the African environment and are not able to put the Ethiopians' military show together within a reasonable time, say the next nine months or so. Maybe the Somalis even capture Harar and Direedawa, or at least get close enough to the latter to make the airfield unusable. This situation would call for:

- Use of the Ethiopian/Soviet air force, especially the MIG-23s, against "strategic targets" in Somalia to make up for the lack of successes in ground combat;
- More Cubans, at least double the present projected figure, so that Cubans could, if necessary, substitute entirely for the Ethiopians in the composition of a major striking force;
- A substantial enlargement of the Soviet advisory presence, with even stronger emphasis on logistic teams and on taking over the defense of Asab and the roads inland (this development

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would be hastened by a Somali or Eritrean attack on the Asab port and POL storage facilities);

-- A Soviet effort to bring the political situation in Addis Ababa under better control and thus ensure both that the rear is more reliable as their investment increased and that the effort to organize the Ethiopian army was less hindered by ideological diversions.

While anti-Soviet elements generally might derive satisfaction from the Soviets' discomfiture in these circumstances, the anxieties in Africa over great power intervention would be sharpened (still focused on worry about what the US is going to do), while no more sympathy would be generated for the Somali cause. The effort to take Harer and Diredawa, and to defend them once taken, would escalate the Somalis' requirements for logistic support and equipment, while the air warfare carried on by the Ethiopians and Soviets would call for more intervention from those countries, like Egypt, which could conceivably help in air defense. Were the air campaign prolonged, foreign pilots might well be introduced on the Somali side on the ground that the air war was indeed violating Somali sovereignty.

But none of these developments would likely make the Ethiopians abandon the idea that military victory was essential before negotiations could begin, and the costs to the Soviets and Cubans of further support would still appear small, as seen from Moscow and Havana, especially as compared to the consequences of having failed to defend a socialist revolution as its leaders wished to be defended. This possibility, then, appears to me to simply prolong the problem and promote the entry of additional and more dangerous elements.

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A second possibility is that the Soviets and Cubans, finding the task of pushing the Somalis back step by step, and hill by hill, is too frustrating and costly in casualties, take up again the Ethiopian/US plan of an end run into Somalia, seizing Hargeisa or, more daringly, breaking through in the far north and coming down the coast to occupy Berbera. They then halt there, and attempt to carry out the strategy of trading northern Somalia for the Ethiopian Ogaden.

The foreseeable consequences of this move are the reasons why I believe that it is less likely than the Part II scenario. First, it would not, I suspect, produce the quick results desired by the Soviets and Cubans. The Somali reaction would be to go over to guerrilla warfare, since it would be very difficult for the Somalis to sustain a regular campaign in the northern Ogaden without Berbera in hand, and the Soviets and Cubans would find their lines of communication toward Ethiopia under very severe harassment. Second, while the Cuban force in Berbera could be supplied by the Soviets from the sea, as Massawa is at the moment, the fact that this was a foreign, non-African occupation would be so obvious as virtually to compel a reaction from the Iranians and Egyptians and thereby bring about a degree of foreign involvement that the Soviets would be reluctant to contemplate, even though the Iranians and Egyptians could not do much in practical terms. Third, the political damages to the Soviet image in the rest of Africa would be severe and comparatively lasting; other African leaders would be genuinely frightened of this demonstration of Soviet/Cuban power, and there would be a tendency to draw together to try to find safety from it. Neto, on the other hand, might well

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ask why, if this could be done for the Ethiopians, something better cannot be done for him. Neither of these reactions would be welcome to the Soviets at this time, in my opinion. Finally, the immediate result of this Soviet success would be strategic failure, in the sense that the Somalis' unwillingness to come to negotiate would drive the Soviets to consider a wider occupation, the setting up of a puppet regime, and other measures, costly and ultimately counterproductive in terms of the kinds of relationships the Soviets want to have with the countries of this region. The stage would be set for a longer run turn back toward the West.

A third possibility is that the Somalis' military effort collapses rapidly and completely. They in effect scatter from the field to fight if possible another day, are subjected to some form of Ethiopian military occupation in the north and to an armistice control commission (a la Vichy) in the south to determine reparations, and are saddled with a new regime, drawn from those elements denied their full share of power under Siad and sustained by Soviet sympathizers who went underground during 1977 (if such there be -- we have no evidence they exist in fact, although it seems a logical presumption). All this would clear the way for the Horn of Africa-Southern Arabia Co-Prosperity Sphere that Castro dangled last spring before the eyes of Mengistu, Siad, and the PDRY crowd. It is virtually inconceivable that such a construction would be anything but jerry-built, given the strength of Somali nationalist feeling, the Somalis' hatred of the Ethiopians, the Ethiopians' inability to accept even Eritreans as their equals, and the distaste of all the African parties [REDACTED] The seeds of future, and not so distant, disaster for Soviet policy would surely have been sown.

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Immediately, however, such "success", even if it did not include the gradual confederation of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and PDRY, would produce some frantic reactions. To the Saudis it would seem the end of the world as they know it, although in time this reaction would moderate as the cracks in the situation became more evident and room for maneuvering reappeared. I cannot judge what the full impact of their feeling on relations with the US might be, but fundamentally I do not see where else they have to go at this point.

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Calls for arms would multiply surely.

This kind of defeat would add to Sadat's burdens, assuming Egypt had become identified with the Somali defense, particularly if ~~he~~^{Sadat} has not by this time disengaged himself from his initiative toward Israel or alternatively drawn some sustenance from it. A sudden quietness would settle over the Black African leaders, as they hunkered down to await developments; certainly no critical initiative could be expected from that quarter to help counter the Soviets' successes. The Kenyans would be frightened out of their wits, and come to think of trading F-5s in for MIGs, while Idi Amin might apply for membership in the new Soviet club, or launch some adventure against Kenya to regain Uganda's lost territory west of Rift Valley.

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The longer term significance of this development would turn on the US reaction. If Washington were seen to be riding it out, taking the minimum steps to reassure nervous allies and pointing to the weaknesses that must be obvious in the new alignments in the Horn (after all, the Somalis had spent more than a dozen years in close association with the Russians and the relationship had broken up), the damage could be limited. But, again, if the US chose to portray this development as some sort of irretrievable "solution," the end of the game, this perception could "take" and could be damaging to the whole range of our relationships in this part of the world until it became apparent that the historical processes had not stopped and that the local constants were still there.

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A Footnote on Djibouti

Given what has been the basic French attitude, which I understand to be a desire to get out of Djibouti with as much grace and as few casualties, physical and political, as possible, it follows that the longer term fate of Djibouti under any scenario depends on the degree of Ethiopian dominance in regional affairs. It is conceivable, for example, that under the conditions outlined in Part II, the situation in Djibouti could shift only gradually in the direction of a pro-Ethiopian or at least less pro-Somali regime. This would be a shift back to the French scheme as of 1975.

The scenarios in Part III that give the Ethiopians and Soviets more dramatic "successes" would mean a more rapid, even coup-like shift toward Ethiopian control and toward the possibility that Djibouti would become a new Berbera as far as the Soviets are concerned. Certainly, under these conditions, the Soviets would have a much broader choice of shore facilities to support their naval operations, and could make the choice on the basis of naval logistic and communications considerations rather than politics.

If French attitudes are not what I assume them to be, then there clearly would be complications with Paris as the Ethiopians/Soviets move into Djibouti. Just what these might be is hard to say, but in the end they probably would not matter much locally (i.e., the French would get out), although they could contribute something to poisoning the air of French-Soviet relations.