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Fighting in Border Dispute. - Peace Appeals by U Thant and Organization of African Unity. - Cease-Fire Agreement after Mediation by Sudan Government.

The long-standing dispute over border areas between Ethiopia and Somalia, which had led to repeated clashes over a period of years going back even before Somalia's achievement of independence in 1960, erupted again at the beginning of 1965.

Following the announcement of Soviet military aid which would enable Somalia to establish an army of 20,000 men, the Emperor Haile Selassie in a statement on Nov. 13, 1963, to 12 foreign ambassadors in Addis Ababa had expressed his concern at this military build-up, which he claimed was "out of proportion to the internal security needs" of a country such as Somalia.

In a joint statement submitted to the Organization of African Unity on Jan. 16, 1964, the Governments of Ethiopia and Kenya denied charges by the Somali Government that the mutual defence agreement between Kenya and Ethiopia was directed against the sovereignty and integrity of Somalia; claimed that the agreement was purely defensive and "not essentially bilateral" as it provided for the inclusion of other neighbouring States; and stressed that it was in any case in conformity with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter and with the Charter of the O.A.U. At the same time the statement called attention to "the well-known fact" that the leaders of Somalia were "pursuing a policy of territorial expansion at the expense of neighbouring States."

Clashes occurred during January and February 1964 at many different places along the 900-mile border both on Somali and on Ethiopian territory. Not all the fighting, however, involved the armed forces of Somalia, being in part due to the activities of insurrectionist Somali bands in the Ethiopian province of Ogaden under the leadership of Mukhtal Taher, the self-styled "Prime Minister" of a "liberation Government" set up in the province.

Mukhtal Taher had led an earlier revolt against Ethiopia in 1949, been sentenced to death but pardoned by the Emperor, and been imprisoned for 10 years. The 1963 rebellion was said to have begun after the Emperor had rejected the Ogaden Somalis' demand for internal self-government and had allegedly ordered the closure of Koran schools and changes in marriage and divorce customs. The Somali Government, however, was reported to have firmly refused official support to Mukhtal Tabor. The Ethiopian authorities stated in January 1964 that the situation in the Ogaden had deteriorated considerably since June 1963, that they had reinforced Ethiopian military units in the province, and that a local militia would be established.

Divergent reports were issued in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu on the clashes between Ethiopian armed forces and Somali troops and irregulars.

The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry stated on Jan. 16 that armed Somalis from Somalis had on Jan. 11 killed 15 Ethiopian policemen in a raid inside Ethiopian territory; an Ethiopian Army patrol had pursued the raiders, killing 43 of them and wounding many others. Other Ethiopian reports claimed that Somali aircraft had violated Ethiopian airspace on Jan. 14-16. and that after isolated attacks a more serious clash had taken place in the Jijiga district, in which 300 armed men from Somalis had been repelled by Ethiopian security forces and had lost "several dozen" killed. The Somali Government sent a strong protest to Addis Ababa on Jan. 16 against the alleged destruction of two Somali frontier police posts in the upper Juba River region by Ethiopian aircraft.

A "mass attack" by "military forces of the Republic of Somalis" on the Ethiopian frontier post of Tog Wajaleh was reported from Addis Ababa on Feb. 7. The fighting—in which the Somalis were said to have used tanks and heavy weapons—continued until Feb. 10, when Ethiopian sources claimed that 307 Somalis had been killed and 492 wounded, 5 mortars, 18 machine-guns, 298 rifles, 2 anti-aircraft guns, and a field radio transmitter captured, and 40 Somali lorries destroyed; Ethiopian losses were given as "about 10 dead and 44 wounded." In clashes on Feb. 11 near Debra Goriale, 93 Somalis were said to have been killed. The Ethiopian Defence Ministry on Feb. 13 gave Ethiopian Army losses since Feb. 7 as 30 killed and about 50 wounded, while claiming that 400 Somalis had been killed and 750 wounded.

The Somali Government alleged that Ethiopian fighter aircraft had attacked police posts and towns inside Somalis and that Ethiopian troops had entered Somali territory; at Ferrer, the border post on the road to Mogadishu, they had on Feb. 12 seized the Somali half of the village but had been ejected by Somali police who had then dug in outside the deserted village, its population having fled into Somalia. It was also claimed that the Somalis had blown up an Ethiopian ammunition dump near Tog Wajaleh, resulting in the death of many Ethiopians, and that eight Ethiopian armoured cars had been destroyed; Somali casualties were given as 14 dead and 34 wounded. Reports from Mogadishu on Feb. 14 said that 5,000 Somalis on either side of the border had been made homeless by the fighting.

After the incident at Tog Wajaleh, the Emperor Haile Selassie addressed a message on Feb. 8 to all Heads of African States informing them of this "latest in the series of incidents... provoked by armed bands from the Republic of Somalia" and announcing that it had been necessary to declare a state of emergency in the border region. The Ethiopian Foreign Minister handed the Somali Charge

aggrandisement at the expense of their neighbours.” Dr. Shermarke replied that the Somali Government was ready to start from a “starting point” an immediate cessation of hostilities with Ethiopia, and suggested that the security Council should respect the territorial integrity. On Feb. 12 the Somali Government asked U Thant to send a commission of independent observers to take responsibility for the fighting and to supervise a cease-fire.

An end to the hostilities was also called for by the Governments of many African countries and by the U.S.A., which the Somali Government urged both countries “to take all necessary measures for an immediate cease-fire on the Somali-Ethiopian border, stating that it was “the conviction of the Soviet Government that in our time there are not and there cannot be between African States territorial disputes, any unsettled border issues, the settlement of which would require recourse to armed force.”

The Ethiopian Minister of Information (Blatta Germatchew Tokio Hawariat) announced on Feb. 10 that the Emperor had ordered his troops “not to follow up their advantage over the Somali frontier,” and stated on Feb. 13 that fighting had practically stopped along the border.

The Somali Government called on Feb. 11 for the inclusion of the dispute in the agenda of the O.A.U. Foreign Ministers’ conference which was to open in Dar-es-Salaam on the following day to discuss the events in East Africa. On his way to the conference the Somali Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdullahi Issa, said in Nairobi on Feb. 12 that a plebiscite should be held in the area of the conflict where the inhabitants, he claimed, were Somalis who wished to accede to Somalia; he denied Ethiopian allegations that Somalia had begun the fighting, saying that the Somali Army consisted only of 2,000 men who were fighting in self-defence.

The Dar-es-Salaam conference discussed the conflict on Feb. 14 and approved a resolution calling on Ethiopia and Somalia to proclaim an immediate cease-fire, to abstain from all hostile propaganda against each other, and to settle their disputes by peaceful means. The resolution—worked out by a commission of 13 members (Cameroon, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Somalis, Tunisia, the U.A.R., and Upper Volta)—also provided for the inclusion of the dispute in the agenda of the next O.A.U. Foreign Ministers’ conference which was to open in Lagos on Feb. 24. It was announced on Feb. 28 that this conference had referred the border disputes between Ethiopia and Somalis on the one hand and between Kenya on the other to a sub-committee of 13 “for close examination.”

Meanwhile the cease-fire had officially become effective at noon on Feb. 16 after President Ibrahim Abboud of the Sudan informed the Emperor Haile Selassie that the Somali Government had accepted the Dar-es-Salaam proposals to that effect.

The Somali Government, however, alleged that although they had complied with the request for immediate cessation of hostilities on Feb. 14, the Ethiopians had continued their “punitive actions,” had destroyed by shelling the Somali side of Ferrer, and on Feb. 14-15 bombed the villages of Gura and Jomeh and the regional centre of Galcaio, causing casualties at the Somali army camp there. The Ethiopians alleged on Feb. 16 that the cease-fire had been broken by Somalis attacking the villages of Gura and Jomeh, as well as Ferrer, but after an appeal by President Nkrumah of Ghana for effective observance of the cease-fire no further fighting was reported on subsequent days.

The cease-fire was, however, breached several times during March, the most serious fighting taking place towards the end of the month.

An Addis Ababa report stated that an attack by Somali troops had been made at Debra Goriale on March 5. A Mogadishu report on March 27 alleged that Ethiopian troops were fighting civilians at Habas and that 150 Ethiopians had been killed or wounded, seven soldiers killed and 22 wounded. The report also said that Ethiopian armoured vehicles and a camp at Debra Goriale had been destroyed; that the Somali Government had protested to Ethiopia against four attacks by Ethiopian artillery and aircraft on border posts; and that President Osman had sent messages about these incidents to the Heads of African States and the O.A.U. Secretariat. Fighting continued on March 30 at Tog Walajeh and Eneguha, and clashes at Ferrer were reported in Addis Ababa the following day. In Mogadishu it was announced, also on March 31, that four Ethiopian aircraft had bombed Hargeisa and that fighting had occurred at many points along the frontier; an air attack—later stated to have been made in error—was also made the same day on the permanent camp of the East African Desert Locust Control Organization near Hargeisa, which had been destroyed; the six Britons and their families who were stationed at the camp escaped unharmed, but over £100,000 worth of property was destroyed.

