

Ethiopian-Somali Conflict - Somalia's Abrogation of Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union, Expulsion of Soviet Experts, and Severance of Diplomatic Relations with Cuba - Continued Warfare inside Ethiopia - Execution of First Vice-President of Ethiopia's Military Government - Other Developments in Ethiopia

It was officially announced by Radio Mogadishu on Nov. 13, 1977, that because of the Soviet Union's "collaboration with Ethiopia in preparation for an invasion of Somalia" Soviet military and civilian advisers stationed in Somalia would have to leave the country within a week; that all military facilities granted to the USSR in Somalia were withdrawn with immediate effect; that the 1974 treaty of friendship between the two countries was abrogated; that the staff of the Soviet embassy in Mogadishu would have to be reduced; and that Somalia had severed its diplomatic relations with Cuba, with all Cubans being required to leave the country within 48 hours, because of "Cuba's brazen decision to commit its troops on the side of the Ethiopian Government and its propaganda against Somalia".

These decisions were reached at a 19-hour meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party, and their announcement was followed by one of the biggest demonstrations ever held in Mogadishu, where President Siyad Barreh declared in a speech on Nov. 14 that the fighting in the Ogaden desert had become internationalized and that the integrity and independence of all Ethiopia's neighbours-Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan-were being threatened. The President stated in particular: "We are fully convinced of the existence of a joint Soviet-Cuban plan for imminent total military aggression by Ethiopia against Somalia." He added that the West should not cherish the illusion that the overthrow of Lieut.-Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam (the leader of the Ethiopian military Government), who, he said, advocated "the birth of a new Cuba in the Horn of Africa", would solve the problem because the Soviet Union had built up in Ethiopia a political system with sufficient cadres to replace Lieut.-Colonel Mengistu and to continue his regime.

In the Soviet Union the Somali decisions were not announced until Nov. 15, when it was officially stated that Somalia's abrogation of the treaty of friendship was entirely due to the Soviet refusal to support Somalia's "territorial claims against a neighbouring state" and "to facilitate the stirring-up of fratricidal war in the Horn of Africa". Calling the Somali Government "chauvinistic and expansionist", Tass, the official Soviet news agency, added that the Soviet Union was "resolved to recall all its specialists" since they were no longer wanted in Somalia.

In the United States Mr Hodding Carter, spokesman for the State Department, said on Nov. 14 that the Somali decisions would not change the US policy of not supplying arms either to Somalia or to Ethiopia and of favouring the maintenance of existing frontiers in the Horn of Africa and the "restoration of Ethiopia's territorial integrity". At the same time Mr Carter referred to US concern at the recent growth of Cuba's military and civilian presence in Ethiopia (which according to Washington estimates included that of some 400 military personnel so below).

The Somali decisions had been preceded by "serious warnings" issued to the USSR by President Siyad Barreh in October and early November, together with an appeal to Western powers to "assume their responsibilities" in the Horn of Africa.

In a nationwide broadcast on Oct. 21 (the eighth anniversary of the Somali Army's seizure of power in 1969A), President Siyad Barreh had condemned the Soviet Union for "pouring huge quantities of armaments, including the latest fighter planes, tanks and missiles", into Ethiopia and had said that "the continuation of the present all-out armed support for the Ethiopian regime by the USSR and the influx of Cuban troops" put the relations between these countries and Somalia "in great jeopardy". Of the Ogaden region and Eritrea he had said that they were "examples of colonial territories under a Black colonial

power", and he had also asserted that "widespread killings" were being carried out in Ethiopia "in cynical violation of human rights".

At a press conference in Mogadishu on Nov. 2 the Somali President had said: "The Somali Democratic Republic has never been anybody's stooge. I hereby declare that Somalia pursues a non-aligned foreign policy. We are opposed to becoming anyone's followers."

On the presence in Ethiopia (and in particular in the eastern Ogaden region) of Cuban advisers or military forces, and also of personnel from the People's Democratic Republic of (South) Yemen, conflicting statements had been made from time to time, while during a visit to Cuba on Oct. 15-19, 1977, Colonel (Dr) Feleke Gedle-Ghiorgis, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, was reported to have obtained promises of full support for Ethiopia from the Cuban Government.

Reports of the alleged arrival in Ethiopia of Cuban troops air-lifted from Angola (according to sources in Somalia and in South Africa) were officially denied in Addis Ababa on Oct. 4 and in Angola on Oct. 6, while the US State Department announced on Oct. 4 that it had no confirmation of such Cuban troop movements.

Whereas the Somali Government persisted in claiming that there were up to 15,000 Cuban troops in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Ministry of Information and National Guidance denied on Nov. 3 that any such troops were engaged in fighting in the Ogaden region. The Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF), however, had first reported the presence of Cuban advisers on the battlefield near Dire Dawa on Oct. 11, and, according to an Ethiopian defector quoted in Mogadishu on Nov. 8, there were a large number of Cuban troops being taken to the front near Harar (as well as South Yemeni forces committed to battles east of Dire Dawa and East German troops being also involved in the war).

All 44 Cubans present in Somalia departed for Aden on Nov. 15, and between 5,000 and 6,000 Soviet citizens, including some 2,000 civilian and military experts, left the country between Nov. 15 and 20, the majority by air and others by sea, with three Soviet ships off Mogadishu being reported on Nov. 20 as loading "sensitive" military equipment from Soviet installations in Somalia.

Tass reported on Nov. 20 that Somalia had also ordered the expulsion of all correspondents of the Tass and Novosti news agencies.

Among countries officially welcoming the Somali decisions were the People's Republic of China and Oman.

Meanwhile the Somali Government had pursued its efforts to obtain arms and other support from powers other than those of Eastern Europe.

According to an announcement made on Radio Ethiopia on Oct. 12, the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq had decided at a meeting on Aug. 15 to support the Somali war effort with a grant of \$400,000,000 (about £230,000,000) and a force of 3,000 men.

Mr Zuhair Zakariya, a member of the Syrian *Baath* Party, said at the end of a visit to Mogadishu on Oct. 25 that Syria fully supported "all peoples struggling for their freedom and independence" and did not approve the continued "colonization" of the Somali people by the Mengistu regime.

Radio Mogadishu announced on Oct. 26 that on the previous day Major Mohammed Dayfallah Mohammed, commander of the Air Force of the (North) Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), had, after delivering a message to President Siyad Barreh from Lieut.-Colonel Ahmed Hussein el Ghashmi, the Chairman of the Presidential Council of the YAR, declared that the YAR would continue to give all-out support to Somalia's stand which his country, he said, regarded as "an Arab cause".

with a message for the Somali President from Mr Salim Rubbaya Ali, Chairman of South Yemen's Presidential Council. The WSLF had maintained that South Yemen was actively supporting Ethiopia.]

A Somali military mission led by Brigadier Anmed Suleiman Abdullah, the head of Somalia's National security Service and the President's son-in-law, visited Tehran on Nov. 6 with a message from President Siyad Barreh to the Shah of Iran, and on Nov. 7 it was announced in Kuwait that Iran had sent a military mission to Somalia. The Shah was, however, subsequently reported to have said that he could not support Somalia as strongly as he would like to do since Iran had been reminded that it could not pass US-supplied weapons to third countries, and to have added: "So we gave them small arms instead."

On Nov. 23 President Siyad Barreh expressed disappointment that the United States had rejected an appeal made by him for military assistance, and he said that Europe and the USA had "particular responsibilities to ask their friends by whom he was understood to mean countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran] to help us" in order to prevent the Soviet Union and Cuba from "engulfing" the Horn of Africa and endangering the trade route through the Red Sea.

Wider Support sought by Ethiopia - Rejection of Ceasefire Proposals

The Ethiopian Government, while continuing to intensify its relations with communist countries, also made approaches to other powers for support of its country's territorial integrity.

An embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of (North) Korea had been opened in Addis Ababa on May 20, 1977, and in North Korea this step was seen as a contribution to the "further development of friendship and co-operation between the two countries

Soviet arms for Ethiopia, said to have been supplied partly via Libya, were on Oct. 2 reported to include at least 58 batteries of "Stalin organs" or BM-21s, consisting of 40 rockets of 122 mm calibre mounted on lorries-as had been used by the Cubans in the Angolan war .

Mr Anatoly Ratanov, the Soviet ambassador in Addis Ababa, assured the Ethiopian Government on Oct. 18 that the USSR had ceased to supply Somalia with weapons even before "the Somali invasion of the Ogaden region", and on Oct. 24 he declared at a ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the (Russian) October Revolution that the Soviet Union would "remain on the Ethiopian side in the defence of its revolution and unity".

During a visit to Tehran Colonel Feleke, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, on Oct. 24 delivered a message from the Ethiopian head of state to the Shah of Iran and also had talks with Mr Abbas Ali Khalatbari, his Iranian counterpart.

At the end of a visit to Rome by Major Dawit Wolde Ghiorgis, Permanent Secretary at the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry, on Oct. 26-27, it was stated in a joint communique that Italy opposed measures taken against the unity of Ethiopia and would spare no effort to bring about a peaceful solution of the problem. It was also disclosed that an Italian delegation would visit Ethiopia to "find ways of strengthening the links between the two countries, especially in the economic field".

Dr Klaus Kinkel of the West German Foreign Ministry said during a visit to Ethiopia on Nov. 4 that the Federal Republic of Germany supported the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Ethiopia in accordance with the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Earlier both sides to the Ethiopian-Somali conflict had stated their opposition to agreeing on a ceasefire. The WSLF had stated late in September 1977 that there could be no ceasefire as long as the Addis Ababa regime did not recognize "the people's right to self-determination" and that, on the contrary, the WSLF intended to "liberate" the towns of Harar and Dire Dawa and thereafter to advance to Awash (about 100 miles east of Addis Ababa).

The Ethiopian Government declared in a statement issued at UN headquarters in New York on Oct. 4 that it was opposed to any ceasefire as long as the Somali "forces of aggression" had not withdrawn completely. After talks between Mr Cyrus Vance, the US Secretary of State, and Mr Abderrahman Jama Barreh, the Somali Foreign Minister, a US State Department spokesman said in Washington on Oct. 6 that the United States did not intend to supply arms to either side in the conflict until a ceasefire had been accepted by them, and that the USA had proposed the holding of a referendum in the Ogaden region to determine whether its population wished to retain its links with Ethiopia or to be attached to Somalia.

While the withdrawal of Soviet personnel was in progress a US delegation led by Mr Melvin Price, the (Democratic) chairman of the House of Representatives armed services committee, visited Somalia on Nov. 16, having previously visited Israel, Egypt, Iran and Kenya, and being scheduled to proceed to Zambia and the Ivory Coast.

The war on the Ogaden front continued during the months of October and November 1977, though without the spectacular advances of the WSLF forces which had led to the capture of the key town of Jijiga in mid-September.

According to Western journalists who visited the area shortly afterwards, Jijiga-from which most of its population had fled or been removed-had been lost to Ethiopia because of a mutiny in the Ethiopian Third Army Division whose members, after killing a colonel and several other officers, had retreated without fighting. The town's fall was acknowledged on Oct. 16 by Major Dawit Wolde Ghiorgis, Permanent Secretary at Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry.

The WSLF claimed on Sept. 27 that during the conquest of Jijiga it had captured or destroyed 43 Ethiopian tanks (11 of them being Soviet T-34 tanks received by Ethiopia via Aden in April 1977 and the remainder American-made) as well as 28 armoured personnel carriers, and that large quantities of ammunition, seized in underground depots at three locations, had included Soviet-made ammunition for US-made M-41 tanks. (According to a report published on Nov. 9 a total of 108 Ethiopian tanks had been stationed at Jijiga early in

September 1977.)

The continued fighting resulted in large numbers of casualties on both sides, with the WSLF claiming inter alia on Oct. 3 to have killed some 200 Ethiopian soldiers near Harar, on Oct. 10 another 800 at two separate localities, and on Nov. 6 more than 400 soldiers and militiamen near Harar in the previous week.

On Nov. 13 WSLF forces estimated at about 20,000 men launched a new offensive against about 60,000 Ethiopian regular troops and militiamen using 80 tanks and 200 light armoured cars and defending positions near Harar and Dire Dawa, and again the WSLF claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties. On Nov. 23 the first WSLF units were reported to have entered Harar.

Further moves towards a unification of the three Eritrean liberation movements took place in October 1977. Under an agreement signed in Khartoum (Sudan) on Oct. 20 by Mr Anmed Nasser and Mr Isaias Afewerki, the respective leaders of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF), joint co-ordination committees were to be set up in the military, information, economic, social and foreign affairs fields, and the Eritrean Liberation Front-Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF) was asked to join one or the other of them. Mr Osman Saleh Sabeh, the ELF-PLF leader, however, stated on Oct. 23 that his 2,000-strong organization would remain militarily and politically independent until an ELF-EPLF merger had been finalized.

The EPLF claimed further military successes during October and November.

On Oct. 14 it said that its guerrillas had seized a convoy of more than 100 vehicles, including newly-supplied Soviet armoured troop carriers, had killed or captured 600 governmental troops and had cut the last road connexion between Asmara (the Eritrean capital) and the port of Massawa. On Nov. 16 it was announced on Tunis radio that the EPLF had again cut the Asmara-Massawa road.

It was officially announced in Addis Ababa on Nov. 13 that Lieut.-Colonel Atenafu Abate, the First Vice-President of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) since February 1977, had been executed.

In a statement issued by the PMAC on that day and broadcast on Nov. 14 it was stated that "a revolutionary measure" had been taken against Lieut.-Colonel Atenafu Abate on Nov. 11 "on the decision of the Congress of the PMAC for counter-revolutionary crimes committed against the broad masses of Ethiopia at a time when the people are engaged in a sustained struggle against their class enemies, the discredited aristocracy and landlords as well as foreign invaders".

A long list of crimes said to have been committed by Lieut. -Colonel Atenafu included opposition to the programme of the National Democratic Revolution; the "weaving" of "anti-revolutionary conspiracies" with "the hirelings of the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)" and making constant contacts with the "internal and external enemies of the revolution, including Central Intelligence Agency agents"; his failure, according to his own confession, to believe in the ideology of the working class; his intention to establish a military dictatorship; and "numerous anti-revolutionary acts serving his own interests and those of people of his kind".

In a further statement issued by the PMAC on Nov. 14, however, all demonstrations of solidarity with the decision to execute Lieut.-Colonel Atenafu were forbidden and "all peasants, workers and progressive Ethiopians" were urged "to strengthen the struggle against counter-revolutionaries on the land, in factories and in offices", to "spread red terror in the camp of reactionaries" and to "turn the white terror of reactionaries into red terror".

Even before this execution, internecine warfare had continued unabated, especially in Addis Ababa.

According to city officials, some 200 *kebele* (neighbourhood association) office-bearers had been assassinated in Addis Ababa alone by members of various Marxist factions, and another 200 seriously injured, during the first nine months of 1977.

Diplomatic sources in Addis Ababa, quoted on Oct. 13, stated that up to 350 persons had been killed in political violence in the capital during the previous two weeks after demonstrations by anti-government left-wing students protesting against alleged executions carried out in prisons.

On Nov. 2 it was announced that Lieutenant Gizew Temesgen, a member of the PMAC and head of the information and communications section of its standing committee, had been murdered. Lieutenant Solomon Legesse, a member of the Revolutionary Defence Committee, was killed on Nov. 13. "Hired assassins" were held responsible in both cases.

Earlier, on Oct. 22, it had been announced in Addis Ababa that eight men who had "directly participated in counterrevolutionary activities" had been found guilty by a court-martial and had been condemned to death and executed after approval of the death sentences by the head of state.-(Times -Daily Telegraph -

Financial Times - Guardian - International Herald Tribune - Le Monde - Neue Zürcher Zeitung - New York Times - Soviet Embassy Press Department, London - Peking Review - BBC Summary of World Broadcasts) (*A; Maps,*

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