

policy paper, pp. 10-11.

43. Deborah Purcell, "Integrating Women into Development," in AID's *Horizons* (July/August 1983), p. 20.
44. The \$10 million set-aside money for WID programming is a provision under a 1978 amendment to the 1973 Foreign Assistance Act. However, it neither authorized separate monies nor earmarked funds for the WID office. Hence it is the prerogative of field missions to spend the money as they see fit.
45. Blair, p. 37.
46. This is particularly significant as evaluation enables one to make informed judgments about policies or programs. As part of the policy process, evaluation refers to the various forms of appraisal that take place for the purpose of judging the merit of public policies or programs. (Jones, 1984)
Evaluation usually consists of the following activities: *specification*, which identifies the criteria by which a program is to be evaluated; *measurement*, which involves the collection of data relevant to what is to be evaluated; *analysis*, which involves the use of the information collected to draw conclusions; and *recommendations*, which determines what is to be done next including such options as "leaving well enough alone," making adjustments in policies or programs, or terminating a program. When this process is not carried out for some policies or programs (as was the case with the Percy Amendment), it suggests that such policies are not "important."
47. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
48. At least part of the reason is because the WID Office had neither the means nor the authority to make independent assessments. This is still the case today. (Coralie Turbitt, 1984).

DAVID LAITIN

The American-Somali Alliance: Whose Agenda?

In August of 1983, General Mohammed Siyaad Barre, who has been President of Somalia since his successful military *coup d'etat* in 1969, travelled in a convoy of Toyota and Mercedes Land Cruisers (backed with a private oil rig, since there would be no petrol on the way) from Mogadisho to the coastal town of Brava. His purpose was to escape from the pressures of the capital city to contemplate his political situation. He had once broken his alliance with the Soviet Union, hoping that he would find a better ally in the Americans. Yet the Americans were full of promises but virtually empty with deliveries. The Somali officer corps was already restive. Where were the weapons that the Americans had promised? Among his other problems—a rebellion among dissident clans; a petrol shortage; and a vast refugee population torn from their homes amid a war with Ethiopia in 1977-78 and who still cannot return—Siyaad Barre had to rethink his relationship with America.

This is why the Somali president invited me to his country: Perhaps I could give him some perspective on his troubled alliance with the U.S. I had been a Peace Corps volunteer in his country, and had befriended many Somalis. Yet I had recently testified before two committees of the U.S. House of Representatives that the U.S. should think twice before sending arms to Somalia. "What does that man have against us?" the President asked his close advisors. One of his advisors suggested that the President might invite me to Somalia so that he could find out. The President hoped that if he brought me to his retreat in Brava, I would better understand the Somali dilemma, and consequently become a supporter of his country's cause.

The story of how Somalia became America's newest ally reads like a tale told by an idiot. Unfortunately, its sound and fury may affect significantly America's foreign policy. Americans need no reminding

that alliances with small, apparently insignificant countries sometimes lead us into conflicts in which we have little real interest. Worse, our leaders cannot justify our presence in these places nor can they explain why the party we support merits our aid.

Because Somalia is close to Middle Eastern oil fields, and because its northern port city of Berbera is strategically useful for the quick establishment of a U.S. military presence to protect those oil fields, the United States has begun to cultivate close ties with the government of the Somali Democratic Republic. But the Somali government has an agenda of its own, having little to do with the protection of western oil interests. The Somali people were divided by the imperialist powers in the 19th century scramble for Africa. Ever since Somalia became an independent Republic in 1960, its leaders have made every effort—through diplomacy and warfare—to unite all the Somali peoples under a single flag.

The United States has begun to provide military aid to Somalia and to engage in joint maneuvers with its army. The seeds of a patron-client relationship are being sown. But who will be the patron, and who the client? Whose agenda will define the relationship? Will Somalia become a cog in the Western wheel to protect the free movement of petroleum? Or will the U.S. become the force that enables Somalia to capture militarily a desert territory peopled by Somalis? Before the U.S. inadvertently becomes a slave to Somalia's agenda, before we step into the quagmire of regional warfare, it is best that we learn something about the conflicts that brought us there and the people who inhabit this desert land.

UNDERSTANDING SOMALI NATIONALISM

Somalia straddles the Red Sea and the Indian ocean; its figure seven shape outlining the border of what is known as the Horn of Africa. On the Red Sea Coast (the top of the 7), the climate is torrid, but further south there are mountains, and then the desert follows rich grazing lands. On the Indian Ocean coast, the climate is less forbidding, and there is a large interriverine area in which thorn trees dominate the landscape.

Although Somali civilization is 2,000 years old and Somalis have traded with the Egyptians, Arabs, and Chinese for centuries, it was not until the mid 19th century that Somali territory became consequential for Europe. With the opening of the Suez Canal, European traders needed coaling stations on the Red Sea coast. The British found Aden, on the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula, to be an excellent port, but its hinterland could not provide sufficient meat for the colony that lived there. The northern Somali coast was ideal, and by the turn of the

century some 80,000 sheep and goats were transported across the Red Sea from Berbera to Aden. In an attempt to assure security for their traders, British consuls negotiated and signed treaties of protection with the leaders of the Somali clans engaged in the trade.

But the defeat of the Italian colonial army at the hands of the Ethiopians in 1896 changed entirely the power balance on Africa's Horn. Each of the European powers attempted to outbid each other in order to curry favor with Menelik II, the Ethiopian Emperor. All of Europe was quite willing to grant to Menelik the legitimacy of his inflated vision of Ethiopia's imperial boundaries. In 1897, the British signed a treaty with Menelik in which large tracts of Somali lands that the British had agreed to protect were secretly ceded to Ethiopia.

For their double dealings, the European powers paid a price. For twenty-one years, from 1899 to 1920, Britain (which made a Protectorate of those Somali lands not ceded to Ethiopia) and Italy (which established a Somali colony on the Indian Ocean Coast) found themselves in continual battle with Mohammed Abdille Hasan, a man the British called "The Mad Mullah." He was a religious mystic, an astute politician, a ruthless general and an incomparable poet. He was intent on ridding Somali lands of Ethiopians and Europeans, and his wars challenged colonial armies and emptied colonial treasuries. They also threatened Aden's food supply.

In the wake of his campaigns, a modern form of Somali nationalism was nurtured. The political unity and independence of all Somali peoples became its most cherished goal. The goal was partially fulfilled in 1960, when British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, both receiving independence within days of each other, joined together as the Somali Republic. The new government's primary foreign policy objective was to incorporate those ceded lands in Ethiopia, popularly known as the Ogaden, into the Republic. There were also large Somali populations in northern Kenya and in French Somaliland (which had been the French coaling station on the Red Sea and which is now the independent nation of Djibouti). These two areas were also of considerable concern to Somali leaders at various times, but neither was as essential as the Ogaden, which had some of the best grazing lands and was the home area of many of the most important Somali nationalists.

The quest for a state that would encompass the entire Somali nation put Somalia into a very difficult diplomatic bind. All other African states, while recognizing the absurdity of colonial boundaries, understood that to readjust them would lead to a generation of conflicts. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), in its charter conference, could agree on little else but that the colonial boundaries should be held sacred. Somalia, a charter member, was the only country to demur. The Somalis argued that theirs was a special case, being the only real

nationalist movement in Africa where a people who shared a language, a religion, and a culture sought a state to embody the nation. Standing behind principles that were once considered sacred, and indeed were articulated in Woodrow Wilson's 14 points ("readjustment of frontiers. . . along clearly recognizable lines of nationality"), Somali nationalists argued that their frontiers should coincide with the boundaries of the Somali nation. They also pointed out that Ethiopia was not a colony like other African states, but rather a metropole like the European states. If France and England were forced by African nationalism to give up their colonies, why should not Ethiopia be asked to do the same? Somalis claimed that Africans could be colonialists, and they accused Ethiopia, the one African country to defeat a European army, of colonialism. These ideas were obnoxious to other African Heads of State, and thus the Somalis became diplomatic pariahs in the halls of the OAU.

The Somalis quickly learned that diplomacy without power would be useless for the liberation of the Ogaden. A strong Somali army had to be built. Immediately upon receiving independence, Somali officials went shopping. They could not get arms from America at this time because in 1953 the U.S. signed a long-term agreement with Haile Selassie, Ethiopia's Emperor and Somalia's arch enemy. This agreement permitted the U. S. to build a large communications facility in Ethiopia and it also involved an American commitment to strengthen the Ethiopian army. Somali officials were compelled to turn eastwards and thereby received a generous military aid package from the Soviet Union. The Soviets built up a significant presence in Somalia, and in 1969 when the civilian government began to falter, they encouraged Soviet-trained Somali officers to stage a coup d'etat.

Thus a Soviet-Somali alliance was nurtured. Somalia opted for "scientific socialism" in its development program and allowed its flag to be used for "convenience" in the trade between the Soviet Union and North Vietnam. Thousands of Russian advisors worked in Somalia and thousands of Somalis went for military, technical, and political training to the Soviet Union. The Soviets built up a military facility in Berbera, on Somalia's Red Sea coast, and used the port of Kismaayu, on the Indian Ocean, for warm water naval exercises. In return, Somalia got one of the most sophisticated military arsenals in Africa. In 1974, a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, the first between the Soviet Union and an African state, was signed.

But there were problems on the horizon. First, the Soviets never supported the idea that Somalia ought to "redeem" the Ogaden, even though all Somalis believed that Soviet military aid had that as its very purpose. The Soviets were not willing to accept Somalia's political line that all oppressed nationalities should have the right to self-

determination. And so, the Soviets tried their best to subvert the Somali army from doing precisely what it sought Soviet help in order to do.

The second problem was that by 1974, Soviet ideologues already had their eyes on Somalia's arch enemy. Haile Selassie was overthrown by a military group that considered itself to be scientifically socialist. The Americans were repelled by the violence of that revolution (not only were landlords murdered, but a reign of terror made everyone a target for violence), and in 1977 President Carter's human rights criteria were invoked in order to hold back military supplies programmed for Ethiopia. Furthermore, the communications base in Ethiopia was defunct, supplanted by satellite technology. America therefore kept Ethiopia at arms length.

However, the Soviets were interested. With 30 million people (compared with 4 million Somalis), Ethiopia appeared to be the better catch. Besides, the Ethiopian revolution struck a responsive cord among the Russians. Just like the Russian revolution, it was justified with socialist rhetoric; it unleashed a series of civil wars instigated by oppressed nationalities, and because Ethiopia was a feudal society, the revolution opened up opportunities for land reform and provided a basis for the language of class warfare. From the Soviet point of view, the Somalis experienced a socialist coup, but the Ethiopians were experiencing a real revolution. They deserved Soviet support. The Soviets made quiet overtures to the new government of Ethiopia. They hoped that they could finesse the question of the Ogaden by supporting a socialist confederation that encompassed both Somalia and Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, the Somalis saw in the chaos that followed in the wake of the Ethiopian revolution the opportunity for capturing political control over the Ogaden. They began to send military supplies to the guerilla organization operating there known as the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). By 1977, when the WSLF had made significant advances in the Ogaden, Somali regular troops slipped furtively away from their battalions (right under the eyes of their Soviet "advisors") and regrouped as a regular army in the Ogaden.

The Soviets were irate. They felt that the Somalis acted outrageously when Fidel Castro went to the Horn in order to fashion a socialist confederation. (Castro was so ill-briefed that he was unaware of any Somali-Ethiopian enmity when he arrived. He spoke to a packed crowd at the Mogadisho football stadium and could not understand the stunned silence when he held up his arms asking the Somalis to chant, "Long live the Ethiopian revolution"). Somali leaders rejected Castro's terms.

Angered by their inability to control their first formal allies in Africa, the Soviets quickly decided that they wanted nothing to do with the

Somali government and gave their full support to the Ethiopians. The Soviets airlifted one and a half billion dollars of military supplies to Ethiopia. With these supplies and 6,000 Cuban troops, the Ethiopians were able to stall the Somali advance in the Ogaden and completely routed the Somali army. Not only was the Somali army roundly defeated, but nearly a million refugees were chased from the Ogaden and settled in Somalia. Somalia became a country where 25 percent of the population were refugees without the means to support themselves. Somalia thereby became a ward of the international aid community.

Somalia now faced a real security threat since an Ethiopian counter-invasion looked imminent. It's leaders, desperate, sought military aid from the other great power: America. America's national Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was receptive. He argued that the U.S. should come to Somalia's aid, whatever the regional issues involved, because massive Soviet military moves must be contained if the U.S. was to sustain its credibility as a great power. Real detente could not succeed, he maintained, if the Soviets felt that they could make strategic advances without facing a U.S. counterweight. If the U.S. permitted the Soviets to become the only significant military force in the Horn of Africa, Brzezinski concluded, they would receive the benefit of detente (reduced U.S. pressure on them) without paying the cost (moderating their own behavior). But President Carter, who felt that it was the Somalis who had committed aggression, held that as long as Somali troops remained in the Ogaden, the U.S. would give the Somali Republic no military aid at all. (When he lost that battle, Brzezinski was to write that detente was lost "on the sands of the Ogaden").

The Somali President, Mohammed Siyaad Barre, did everything he could, however shameless, to win American support. With posters of him next to Marx and Lenin still all over the country, Siyaad spoke as if his commitment to the containment of communism antedated Keenan's. He accused America of a "post Vietnam syndrome" in its fear of confronting Soviet military advances. Americans had become soft, and they should demonstrate their commitment to freedom, he argued, by supporting poor Somalia as it faced gaggles of Soviet supported troops and billions in Soviet arms. This was laughable, of course: Siyaad Barre, a military dictator brought on the world stage through the help of the Soviet Union, lecturing the Americans that only by supporting him would they establish their commitment to the containment of communism!

But tenacity sometimes pays. Over the past six years, America's military aid to Somalia has gone from \$20 million per year up to \$40 million, with the Reagan administration, asking for even more. In

August of 1983, 2,800 American Marines were involved in joint exercises with Somali troops near Berbera. Only a few years ago, an American on Mogadisho's streets would feel lonely; today, Americans are all over. Even the Marines who guard the American Embassy feel comfortable enough to hang out in short pants and bare chests in front of the embassy building. A groundwork is being laid for a large American presence in Somalia. Indeed, America appears inadvertently to be sinking into a quagmire in the Horn of Africa.

Who are these Somalis, our newest friends? From one point of view, Somalia is the most egalitarian society in the world. Traditional Somali political organizations recognizes no permanent offices or titles. In clan councils, any (male) has the right to speak, and eloquence (merit) rather than position (status) always takes precedence. The incredible self-reliance instilled in every young Somali boy as he is entrusted with his family's livestock, often for days, gives every Somali man a clear sense that he is the equal of any man.

Within their egalitarian society, however, Somalis are relentless in proclaiming their own nobility. "We are a very noble people," the President said in his opening comment to me when I interviewed him last August, "to invite you here after what you have said about us." (I had testified before the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee that military aid to Somalia would be imprudent). Somalis are preoccupied with the notion of nobility. And this concern for nobility does not just differentiate Somalis from foreigners. Within most Somali clans there are families who are iron mongers or pursue other crafts. These people are outsiders, and are not permitted to marry within the noble lines. The celebration of pastoral egalitarianism and the assertion of nobility coexist uncomfortably in Somali society.

The position of women in Somali society leads to the same juxtaposition of opposites. On one hand, Somali has opened up the gates for female participation in modern life. Since independence, when less than 20 percent of the primary school students were female, the figure has gone up to nearly 40 percent. There were hardly any female primary school teachers in the early 1960s; now nearly 30 percent are women. In 1974, President Siyaad changed the laws of inheritance giving women equal rights as men. (He subsequently executed ten shaykhs who preached against him for doing so). On the other hand, Somali women are still kept of of prestigious positions regarded as male preserves: key government offices and leadership roles within clans. In addition, many Somali girls are still subject to infibulation that often leads to medical complications.

Somalis cope with these opposites. They now live under a military dictatorship, yet in strange ways their freedom and dignity have not been emasculated. Since the 1969 coup d'etat, Somalia has been ruled

by a Supreme Revolutionary Council that has the power to make and rescind laws. The President, who is chair of the SRC, has been a virtual dictator for fifteen years. He has executed opponents seeking his overthrow, shayhs seeking to keep women in their place, and generals who criticized him for bad leadership in the 1977-78 war to liberate the Ogaden. He has arrested students for reading subversive materials and Ministers for demonstrating their own independence. The National Security apparatus, formed with East German technical aid and supervised by Siyaad's son-in-law, has been famous for midnight arrests and the concoction of evidence allowing it to send any Somali into solitary confinement. There is no independent press permitted at all in Somalia, and of course no opportunity to vote against the policies and practices of the Siyaad Barre regime. From this, one could easily conclude that there is little respect for individual rights in Siyaad Barre's Somalia.

Yet the President cannot be written off as an Amin, or Mobutu, or Bokassa, those African leaders who have systematically murdered their own people. Siyaad Barre has shown some respect for the dignity of his political prisoners. Former Prime Minister Egal, whose government was overthrown in 1969, was put under arrest in a pleasant guest house overlooking the Shabeele River. Later on he became Ambassador to India, but he was arrested again. Now he is out of jail, and has been given a fresh start with a generous Letter of Credit (enabling him to engage in commerce) from the President. Other political enemies have gotten similar treatment.

In addition, despite the absence of a free press, the President has not stifled the poetic assault on the legitimacy of his regime. Somali poets have used the classical poetic style to point out that Somali society is more corrupt, more tribalist, and more backward today than it was before the revolution. These poems are recorded on cassettes and circulated throughout the countryside.

Somali society can be described by the juxtaposition of opposites: equal, but conscious of nobility; women free and mutilated; cruelty and compassion to enemies; and dictatorship with high levels of political discourse. These juxtapositions of opposites spill over into Somali diplomacy. And this creates headaches for American officials in Mogadisho.

Somalis, as would any people who have been wronged in the past, fixate on "history." The President down to the shopkeeper and nomad will wax endlessly on the 19th century treaties which dismembered the Somali nation. Foreign visitors are castigated for seeking a solution to the problem in ignorance of history. Any look at history would show, visitors are told, the justness of the Somali cause. Yet when President

Siyaad asked me why I thought that after six years of Somalia's pro-Americanism, the U.S. remained reluctant to give him the weapons and diplomatic support he needed, he was incredulous when I responded that American officials would never trust him. I told the President that people in the State Department and the Pentagon remember his diatribes against U.S. imperialism and his proximity to Comrades Marx and Lenin in Mogadisho posters. But that is ancient history that should be forgotten, the President responded; Somalia has broken from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, no Muslim country could ever really be communist. It could only ally with communists for short term instrumental gains. What can be inferred from this reply is that Britain's ugly treaty with Menelik was *history* and should be remembered, but Somalia's treaty with Brezhnev was merely history and is therefore no longer relevant.

If *history* has a dialectical meaning in Somali discourse, so does the conception of "boundaries." From independence, the Somalis sought to expose the injustice of boundaries which separated them from their brothers, and more important, separated pastures from watering holes. One Somaliphile decried the "frontier fetishism" of other African leaders that prevented the reasonable readjustment of absurd boundaries. Somalis drew official maps of the Horn that conveniently omitted the international boundaries that separated Somalia from its neighbors. Yet today, one hears the word boundary used with reverence in Somali discourse. In July, 1982, Ethiopian forces with Cuban and Russian advisors, and some Somali dissidents at the helm, crossed the internationally accepted boundary and occupied two Somali towns—Blembale and Golgodob. The Somali residents evacuated those towns and the Somali army dug trenches a few kilometers away to create a World War I looking battle line. Most of the officers there—who were briefed that I had opposed the enhancement of American military aid to Somalia—angrily argued that I should now change my line because Somali boundaries had been violated.

I later mentioned to Mohamed Hadji Egal, the Chairman of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, that it was odd to hear Somalis taking African boundaries so seriously. Were they prepared to accept those international boundaries as legitimate, I enquired? Egal reminded me that there is a difference between the boundaries of the Somali nation and the boundaries of the Somali Republic. It is certainly legitimate to fight for the latter when they are violated, he pointed out, even though hoping that those boundaries would ultimately be altered to take into account the former. Egal had a good debater's point, I conceded. But it nonetheless looked odd that Somalis were aghast over the violation of boundaries that they themselves do not respect. And they are therefore perplexed that the

Ethiopian incursion has not provoked international outrage and support for the invaded Somalis.

PRESIDENT SIYAAD BARRE

President Mohammed Siyaad Barre has been at the political helm of this complex society for fifteen years. He was born in the ambiguous zone between Italian Somalia and Ethiopia, close to the town of Beled Weyne, and not far from the villages now occupied by Ethiopian troops. His father is from the Marehan clan, which is a branch of the Darood clan family. His mother is of the Ogaden clan, another branch of the Daroods. The Ogaden clan occupy the westernmost fringes of the Somali nation, and well over half of them live under Ethiopian jurisdiction. (This is why the unredeemed Somali territory is called the Ogaden. The Ogaden clan is the most populous among those clans living under Ethiopian rule). Although Somali culture is patrilineal, most Somalis hold a deep and long standing affection for their mothers and for the clan of their mother. This is why President Siyaad feels an especial commitment to ameliorate the travails of the people living in the Ogaden.

Siyaad Barre was groomed by the Italians for police duty and spent a short time in Italy as a trainee. There, he read history in his spare time and developed an appreciation for politics. He also must have watched Mussolini carefully because Siyaad's love of pomp and his interminable interviews with journalists and ambassadors are so reminiscent of *Il Duce*. He returned to Somalia only to watch the Italians get defeated by the British in 1941 (in Somali popular culture, 1941 is remembered as the year the Italians ran away) and he became a cadet in the British Military Administration. (He thereby became fluent in Italian and English). He rose fast in the army, and by the mid-1960s, he became Somalia's ranking officer.

Although ruthless and ambitious with a love for power, Siyaad Barre is a simple man with deep nomadic roots. In private, he wears homespun cotton clothes, drinks instant coffee from water kept hot in thermoses, and repels his Ministers by smoking low-quality, locally-manufactured cigarettes. As one wealthy businessman who admitted that he took 40 percent commissions on all government contracts put it: "All . . . [Siyaad] wants is power. He has no family life and no bank account." There is a ring of truth to that observation. To be sure, Siyaad's extended family has made wise and copious investments abroad; they are not paupers. But given his nomadic values, he abjures from the ostentatious display of wealth in his own country. (One could not imagine Siyaad doing the rounds of the diplomatic cocktail circuit; he is more often seen in the small villages surrounding Mogadisho,

gossiping with old men).

Siyaad has maintained his power through the construction of a complex web of allies won through political marriages, ministerial appointments, and the granting of letters of credit. He has jailed enemies and then exiled them as ambassadors or, even worse, as technical trainees in the Soviet Union. He has shuffled his Cabinet enough times to keep friends and enemies insecure. He relies on a secret service that has ears in every sub-clan. And the President's own ears are open as well, as he keeps in touch with simple people and listens to their tales of woe. He speaks the language of the people and knows the importance of poetic speech. He still can inspire loyalty among associates and among the popular masses as well.

In his fifteen years of leadership over an unruly and anarchic people, he has many achievements to his credit. Perhaps the most significant one was his authorizing a script for the Somali language and thereby proclaiming Somali to be the official language of the State. For years Somalia limped along with three official languages—English, Italian and Arabic—all of which were spoken by small percentages of Somalis. But while every Somali wanted the language written, no government could get agreement on a script. The religious elites insisted on the Arabic script, even though it is vowel poor while Somali is vowel rich. Ardent nationalists favored one of the indigenously developed scripts. Western educated technical personnel lobbied for a modified Latin script.

It took Siyaad Barre's revolution to stipulate the Latin script and to get the language written. Shortly afterwards, Siyaad Barre closed all intermediate and secondary schools for a year so that all students could go out to the bush in order to teach literacy to the nomads. Literacy rates skyrocketed! The President put it more modestly: "We have not eliminated illiteracy," he told me, "we have just injured it."

Indeed, the President is popular and has a record of achievements, but now he is in deep political trouble. When he received me in the Government Rest House in the coastal town of Brava, he was quick to laugh and to taunt me for my unfriendly political views. His mood, however, was somber. "My greatest goal of a united Somalia," he offered gratuitously, "is growing dimmer." Later on he confessed that "My country is being invaded every day and there is nothing I can do about it."

I offered that the situation was not that gloomy. Compared to the Baluchis and Armenians, the Somalis have not been treated all that badly by history. After all, at least all Somalis have a country to return to that is ruled by Somalis. However, I raised the spectre that if Somalia kept on seeking the unity of all Somalis, it is entirely possible that Ethiopia would invade Somalia, thereby eroding all Somali

self-rule. If Somali leaders continued to press for the self-determination for all Somalis, the next generation of Somali nationalists, with their country a mere province of Ethiopia, might be reduced to blowing up parisian cafes. The President was unimpressed. "So what if we are invaded," he responded, "what have we lost? We have nothing. We have no freedom. We are poor. Let them come. We cannot lose anything . . . There cannot be freedom without security."

His territory is occupied, and some of his own people have turned traitors. The traitors come from one clan (the Majeertayn) in his (the Darood) clan-family and also from the Issaq clan-family dominant in former British Somaliland. Both of these groups have amassed their forces in Ethiopia, and hope, as do the Ethiopians, to overthrow Siyaad Barre's regime. They claim that they are not fighting a tribal war. Rather, they argue that it was Siyaad Barre's policies that drove them to fight as separate clans. Indeed the President is not blameless. The Soviet-inspired National Security Service has so many tentacles that Somalis are drawn ever closer to their own families and sub-clans to protect themselves from government spies. Furthermore, Somalia's economic troubles and its foreign exchange crises have engendered a private banking system for the preservation of remittances from foreign workers. Informal banking systems require a level of trust that can only be attained within the family. Siyaad's own rule, despite his desire to overcome tribalism, has exacerbated it.

But the President is not completely guilty for the resurgence of tribalism. Most of the intertribal wars (which are getting very bloody, since Russian AK-47 rifles and ammunition are as abundant as camel's milk in the bush) are fought on territory under Ethiopian jurisdiction, and the President cannot easily control them. Furthermore, as he pointed out to me, when he cannot provide security to his own people (the Ethiopians bomb towns without meeting any resistance), they must seek security in the old fashioned way—through their clans.

The dissidents, who have come together in Ethiopia, must also share some of the blame. The Majeertayn clan and the Issaq clan-family had many of the important roles in the era of civilian politics. When Siyaad Barre attempted to spread the wealth to other clans, the Issaq and Majeertayn felt relatively deprived and humiliated. Indeed a Majeertayn group attempted to overthrow Siyaad's government, and the President had little choice but to protect himself by giving power to members of friendly clans. Whoever deserves the burden of guilt, Somalia, with perhaps the most homogeneous population of any country in Africa, (only rarely will a Somali correctly guess a stranger's clan just by looking at him; and now, with large urban populations, it is hard to guess even by listening to his accent) is tearing itself apart on the basis of indistinguishable distinctions.

Besides his military and political problems, the President isolated himself in Brava to contemplate an economic crisis. The Somali government is so deeply lacking in foreign exchange that IMF, World Bank, and other experts virtually run the Ministry of Finance. Somalia had been receiving for the past year all of its refined petroleum as a gift from Saudi Arabia, but Saudi generosity was ending. Fuel shortages kept all but official cars off the road. Furthermore, without foreign exchange, virtually all Somali factories were out of operation due to lack of spare parts. The economy survives on the remittances of Somali migrants to the Arab Gulf and the commissions that go to Somali officials and merchants who can act as middlemen for foreign aid contracts. Without any control over this money, Siyaad Barre's government has few options. "I have a whole class of secondary leavers," he mourned, "but I have no jobs for them."

Siyaad's final humiliation, and probably the greatest threat to his power base, concerns weapons. He has told his officers that Somalia's alliance with the U.S. will yield material. Until now the Americans have provided Somali officers with leadership training, authorized the Italians to send some defunct World War II tanks, and supplied the army with a few M-16s, but virtually no ammunition to use them. Siyaad Barre has been double-crossed in front of his own army.

It is no wonder the question uppermost in his mind was how he could milk his friendship with the U.S. more productively. He could never step down, he told a confidant, while his country was occupied. But he has not the resources to put any pressure whatsoever on the Ethiopian troops. In fact, Somalia's sovereignty is violated regularly as Ethiopian troops march past the Somali trenches and cross the only road that connects the southern to the northern region. The Ethiopians return to their former positions, but leave no doubt of their capacity to overrun the Somali Republic.

Why were the Americans such reluctant allies? Why had I advised a committee of the House of Representatives to vote against the administration's request for military aid when it was obvious that Somalia had legitimate security needs? Siyaad Barre posed this question to me in various forms from 8:00 in the evening until the interview ended at 5:30 the next morning.

It appears that despite regular all-night sessions with American officials who suggested to him that the present administration did not want to embrace Somalia, Siyaad Barre chooses to believe that the Reagan administration wants to nurture the young alliance with Somalia. He cites the fact that two Somali Ministers of Defense were invited to Washington to make personal appeals for military aid to Secretary of Defense Weinberger. Both times the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia told the Somali President of the cogency of their missions. But

foreign military aid only trickled in. American officials listed numerous reasons—e.g. the slow procurement pipeline in the American military bureaucracy, and the need for careful justification of all aid packages. But Siyaad Barre picked up on only one source of the problem. He announced the villain: the “Wolpe Committee.”

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN POLICY

The Wolpe Committee is the House Foreign Affairs Africa Subcommittee. For a number of years when it was chaired by Congressman Diggs of Michigan—who was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus—the Africa Subcommittee got directly involved in the question of apartheid in South Africa, and a good deal of what is known about U.S. corporate complicity with the racist regime in South Africa came from the Hearings held by this subcommittee. In the past few years, this committee has expanded its scope and has dealt with other African issues. Its overriding concern was to understand conflicts in Africa from an African perspective so that the U.S. could exert its influence on that continent with more sensitivity than if everything were examined as an issue of communism vs. freedom. The Subcommittee’s outlook came to be known as the “regionalist” (as opposed to the “globalist”) vision in American foreign policy.

The House African Subcommittee did not, of course, stand alone. Within the State Department, the Bureau of African Affairs had long criticized the tendency in American diplomacy to see all conflicts in the world from the perspective of the cold war. When Jimmy Carter became President, the view of the House Subcommittee on Africa and the Africa Bureau in the State Department became ascendant. Carter’s Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, held that the cold war could be thawed if small regional issues were handled on their own terms, and he was therefore receptive to the position of the State Department’s Africa Bureau. When Andrew Young became Carter’s Ambassador to the United Nations, he also became the symbol of this new position. Young argued that the U.S. could garner significant diplomatic gains by examining African issues from a regional perspective. By supporting racial justice and economic development in Africa, no matter what the ideology of the regimes, the U.S. could win allies and strengthen its position in the world. After all, as Donald Easum, then Ambassador to Nigeria and a prominent career official in the Africa Bureau kept pointing out, U.S. economic ties to black Africa were already beginning to outpace our investments in South Africa. We had better establish a firm foundation of friendship in black Africa, he urged. The greatest success of this new approach toward Africa came in Zimbabwe where the U.S. backed an agreement that led to the transition of

power from the minority white settler regime to an elected majority government.

Those who accepted the regional focus for action in Africa interpreted African politics from the perspective of the Organization of African Unity. This organization, they felt, would provide for the U.S. a convenient basis for understanding African politics on its own terms. In regard to the Horn of Africa, the OAU saw the Somalia call for self-determination for the colonized peoples in Ethiopia as illegitimate. This meant that Vance and Young refused to go along with Brzezinski when the National Security Advisor urged that the U.S. come to Somalia’s military aid in 1978. They felt that if the U.S. aided the Somalis, ultimately the Somalis would use U.S. weapons to invade the Ogaden—a cause that no black African state could support. Any diplomatic gains made by the U.S. in Africa would then be undermined.

Wolpe became the Chair of the House Africa Subcommittee in 1982. Carter had already changed his foreign policy course. In the wake of Khomeini’s revolution in Iran, Carter began to see regional conflicts far more in their global dimension. He began to press for massive increases in the American defense budget and ordered the development of a Rapid Deployment Force to protect U.S. interest in the Middle East. This force was designed to enable the U.S. to bring large numbers of troops and weapons to the Middle East on short notice if there were any threat to critical oil fields. A natural base of operations was the abandoned Soviet facility in Berbera. Discounting somewhat his earlier reluctance to aid Somalia, and recognizing that the Somali government did in fact withdraw its regular troops from the Ogaden, Carter agreed to a small military aid package for Somalia in return for access to Berbera.

Formal agreements were signed during the Carter administration. But under President Reagan, the new alliance between Somalia and America had better prospects. Indeed Reagan’s anticommunist line and his adamance concerning Cuban troops in Africa provided better opportunities for the Somalis. In the State Department’s first testimony concerning the Horn with Reagan as President, Lannon Walker, a career official in the Africa Bureau, claimed that, “We have two overriding objectives in the Horn. One has to do with Soviet-Cuban presence and the other with our own access to facilities.” With Carter out of office and the Africa Bureau in the State Department stifled, Wolpe’s Subcommittee became the only forum for those who felt that open friendship between the U.S. and Somalia might lead to some unwanted embarrassments.

Within the Pentagon and State Department, however, there was some reluctance to embrace Siyaad’s Somalia. Pentagon officials remem-

bered how the Somalis defied the Russians in 1977 and voiced fear that if America put up anything substantial at Berbera, it could be lost if there were another *volte face*. In 1978, State Department officials in Political Military Affairs tried to find reasons to hold back virtually every suggested package of armaments to which Somali and U.S. negotiators had tentatively agreed. Even today, the Reagan administration has refused to resupply Somalia with powerful weaponry. Much of the American military aid package amounts to nothing more than leadership training for Somali officers. The basic reason that Somalia has been kept at arm's length is that the Pentagon and State Department do not strongly disagree with the Wolpe Subcommittee. To the extent that American officials in Mogadishu pointed their fingers at Wolpe—whose committee might have had a marginal impact on the ultimate size of the military aid package—they were making a convenient excuse.

Siyaad felt that he had no strategy for courting the Reagan administration. How could he convince American officials that he was not a fair weather friend? How could he make clear to Americans that the Soviets were preparing to use Ethiopia as a base to bring Somalia to its knees, and eventually to bring all of East Africa, including Kenya, into its imperial domain? Africa was falling to Soviet communism, and the U.S. seemed unperturbed. Why? And why doesn't the U.S. recognize that Somalia borders on sea lanes vital for Western interests? Doesn't America realize that if Berbera falls to the Soviet Union, the West would be in deep trouble?

To this series of questions, I gave three answers. First, I argued that although the U.S. has sometimes allied with military dictators, we have too often in the past been embarrassed when the dictator was overthrown and his ruthlessness exposed. American administrations, even on the Republican side, will be wary of supporting dictators even if they profess anti-communism. Without elections, political change comes through coup d'état and tomorrow's leaders in Somalia might try to distance themselves from the U.S., which had identified itself with Siyaad Barre. Especially troublesome for the U.S. is the fact that many articulate Somalis living abroad were vocal in their condemnation of Siyaad's rule, and some were seeking his overthrow through military action. If Somalia had a democratically elected government, I suggested, America could better assess the depth of any Somali commitment to a long standing entente with the U.S.

Here the President would not yield an inch. He denied that any form of Western competitive democracy would be possible in Somalia. The Somalis, he said, "don't have the moral development to accept democracy. They require guidance and direction to provide order. . . . With democracy," he concluded, "there will be as many parties as

there are clans." He insisted that he ruled fairly, that his enemies were traitors paid by foreign governments, and that his rule would continue long enough to provide fruit for his foreign allies.

My second argument, that the President's geopolitical analysis was flawed, was similarly received. I argued that Siyaad had an inflated view of the vitalness of Somalia for Western interests. The RDF, I pointed out, had Kenya, Oman, and Egypt for alternate staging grounds. Also, if the Soviets attempted to threaten oil traffic to the West, they would be inviting a response that went far beyond Somalia. The American nuclear arsenal would be alerted. Furthermore, the premise of containment was belied by history. Countries do not fall to communism because their neighbors did, like falling dominoes. Whether the present regime in Kenya would survive its present crisis had little to do with whether Somalia was attacked by the Soviets.

Siyaad Barre had no patience for these arguments. He accused me of being an impractical intellectual who had no understanding of the Soviet Union's capacity for evil. (I heard countless stories of Soviet perniciousness during my visit. The most memorable came from Col. Abdullahi Ahmed Jama, Commander of the 8th Division near the Ethiopian-occupied town of Balembale. As he briefed me concerning the military situation, he apologized for the inadequacy of the map. "When the Soviets left Somalia, they absconded with our maps. That was very unmilitary.") But more important than Kenya, the Somali President began to emphasize, is that Berbera remains a vital area for Western security. "Berbera is vital for the West," the President reiterated with histrionic force. To deny that would be denying that Somalia will continue to play a crucial role in world history. Few Somalis have the ability, the humility, to deny that Somalia is situated in a crucial geopolitical position. Siyaad remains convinced that the U.S. has a formal commitment to protect Somali security (and says he has correspondence to demonstrate that fact), and that Somalia is destined to play a key role in the defense of the West. Like Falstaff at the conclusion of Henry IV, Siyaad waits expectantly and hopelessly to be called upon by the King (President Reagan) to defend the realm.

My final tack, however, brought me closer to my quest. A close military alliance between the U.S. and the Somalis, I have felt, could easily become a nightmare for both parties. Suppose the U.S. does grant Somalia the weapons its leaders are now requesting. Given the massive infusion of Soviet arms into Ethiopia, there is no way that American military aid will be sufficient to deter an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. One must then ask of the effects that a moderate increase in American military aid to Somalia might have. The most plausible answer to that question is that the development of an arms pipeline from the U.S. to the Somali border on the Ogaden could induce the

Ethiopians to seek a "final solution" to their intractable problem with the Somalis. The Ethiopians could plead with their Soviet patrons that if they march on Mogadishu, they could exterminate forever all Somali opposition.

If this occurred, it would of course be a nightmare for the Somali people. The Ethiopian troops with their Soviet advisors would rely on Somali dissidents, enemies of Siyaad Barre who have reached an accommodation with Ethiopia; claim that if they capture Mogadishu they will not be clients of the Ethiopian state. This is naive. If Ethiopian military might is used to overthrow Siyaad, the sovereignty of the Somali people will become a fiction. The new leaders would have the same autonomy as the present leaders of Afghanistan. Moreover, the war would mean death for too many Somalis. Those who survived such a war would become a people without a country. They would be the Armenians and Baluchis of the late 20th century.

The war would be a nightmare as well for the Americans. Without sufficient power in the region, the U.S. would be at a strategic disadvantage. U.S. policymakers would agonize over whether to counter the invasion to protect a desert that has no oil and a country that few American citizens are aware exists. Yet if the U.S. did not support the Somalis, it would lose access to Berbera, giving the Soviet Union another strategic facility in the Middle East. While hardly vital to the U.S., Berbera in Soviet hands would pose for the Americans a thorny strategic problem.

How can this double nightmare be avoided? In the short term, it means that the U.S. should be very careful that its military aid not provoke a preemptive Ethiopian strike. American prudence would be a more reasonable deterrent than an increased flow of American weapons. In the short term at least, the U.S. can count on the fact that the Ethiopians are preoccupied with other secessionist battles (especially among the Eritreans), and that the Soviets are wary about supporting an invasion in violation of an accepted border.

In the long term, though, the status quo is unacceptable to both Somalis and Americans. The Somalis face a well-equipped Ethiopian force that can attack at any time. Nearly a million refugees from the Ethiopian controlled Ogaden remain destitute in refugee camps in Somalia. Meanwhile, American officials are wary of making use of their facility at Berbera because the area is so unstable politically that the construction of any permanent structure there is too risky.

If there were a regional peace in the Horn of Africa, however, it would work to both Somali and American interests. Relieved of the burden of refugees and the security threat, Somalis would be able to turn their attention to the economic and social development of their land. If the Americans were secure that Somalia sought no more

territory, the U.S. could make Berbera a link in its strategic planning in the Middle East. And finally, if the Ethiopians did not face the threat of a future Somali build up, (and if they could reach an accommodation with Eritrea), they would be able more easily to reestablish their own political autonomy by asking the Soviets and Cubans to leave their country, something that would bring satisfaction to both Somalia and American officials.

If a regional peace—one which brings some justice to the people of the Ogaden—is so desirable, how might it be brought about? My final tack with Siyaad Barre was an attempt to see if there was more room for diplomatic maneuver than most long-term observers of the Horn believe. Most American policymakers feel that the issue is intractable since the Somalis insist on the self-determination for Somalis in the Ethiopian Empire and the Ethiopians insist on the territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state. Here is a conflict of principles in which compromise is apparently impossible.

With this in mind, I told the Somali president that the world would never agree to the fact that Ethiopians were imperialists like the French and British. The Ogaden is more like British control over Wales, U.S. control over Texas or Russian control over Uzbekistan than it is like the British conquest of the Gold Coast or the French conquest of Senegal. Imperial conquests of neighboring territories come ultimately to be seen as examples of "state building" rather than imperialism. Therefore the call for the self-determination of the colonized peoples of the Ogaden, however just, will fall continually on deaf ears.

But abandoning the principle of self-determination does not mean that Somalia should be indifferent to the fact that Ethiopian troops are poisoning the wells and slaughtering the camels of Somalis still living in the Ogaden. Nor should the government of Somalia remain indifferent to the fact that Somalis living in Ethiopia have been ignored for a century and have few schools or hospitals. Somalia should call for the "freedom and dignity" of Somalis who are citizens of Ethiopia, I suggested. This is a message the world was prepared to hear.

If the United States pressed diplomatically for the fulfillment of human rights for Somali-speaking *citizens* in Ethiopia, I asked, would the Somali President be prepared to acknowledge that the freedom and dignity of Somalis within an Ethiopian state would make the question of self-determination moot? The President replied that mine was a good idea and worth exploration. He challenged me to pursue that idea elsewhere.

The prevailing critique of American foreign policy is that there is so much division within the American political system that no policy can be pursued consistently. We cannot support friends or challenge

enemies, or so the argument runs, since opponents of the policy can so easily engender reversals.

There has been some of that in the Horn. Debates within the administration and between the administration and Congress make a coherent foreign policy more difficult to pursue. Furthermore, even while we develop links to Somalia, many officials in the State Department are seeking a reconciliation with Ethiopia, hoping that the Soviet-Ethiopian bond could be broken.

But in the Horn of Africa, the basic reason for American failure is lack of vision, lack of any concept of a plausible future toward which we should work. Propping up the Siyaad government without getting too close to him (so as not to alienate the Ethiopians nor any group that might seek to overthrow Siyaad) seems to be the central premise of our effort. With the food we supply to the 1978 war refugees (nearly a million people who perhaps never will be able to return to Ethiopia), our economic development package, and our military aid this policy is costing us well over \$100 million per year.

And so, the administering of military and civilian aid draws us ever closer to Somalia. The Marine operation at Berbera this past August, part of the RDF's Bright Star exercise, was designed to train U.S. forces to land at any desert site. (It was actually a practice for a possible involvement in Saudi Arabia, but political conditions do not allow us to engage in military exercises on the Arabian peninsula itself. Berbera was considered a good substitute). Of course, to assuage bad feelings, Somali soldiers were integrated into the exercise.

Yet, without any clear vision of the future, the strategy known as incrementalism becomes enshrined. In 1983, 300 American personnel were involved in the Somali component of the Bright Star exercises; 1984 it was 2,800. U.S. economic aid to Somalia follows the same incremental path. We could find ourselves in a few years entrenched in Somalia, with real positions to defend. This is not because anyone believes we ought to be there, but because we have no vision of a desired future that can change our course.

Not only does incrementalism discount the possibility of solutions to conflicts, but in foreign policy, as we saw in Vietnam, it is not a fail-safe strategy either. By gradually arming the Somalis, we may be giving Ethiopia incentives to attack Somalia now when it is weak rather than later when it is strong. If our actions help to provoke an Ethiopian attack, we will find ourselves in a weak military position supporting a state with few allies and a government with many internal enemies. Again, we would find ourselves the client in the patron-client tie. Somalia's agenda, rather than ours, would have defined the relationship. This would be a disaster not only for our African policy, but for our entire society.

American foreign policy in Africa would be better served if we were occasionally able to focus on larger issues. We should seek to identify ourselves with efforts to remedy injustice, so long as the remedy itself is not completely inconsistent with political and military realities.

Why not seek a solution to the Somali dilemma? To be sure, the Ethiopian government, joyous in its military successes, has little incentive to compromise. But the U.S. is not without resources. Its citizens pay heavily for its widespread military and diplomatic presence, and we should demand results. Seeking a long-term solution to the Somali dilemma is far cheaper than sustaining an East-West arms race on Africa's Horn.

CONCLUSION

Our new allies are a complex people. We cannot dictate any solution to them. They are too proud and independent to believe that they are beholden to any great power. They also have reason to be suspicious of any accommodation with Ethiopia. Who could compel the Ethiopian state, they ask, to give rights to its minority peoples?

(I suggested to Faduma Isaaq Dihii, head of the Africa Bureau of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, that separate Republics for Ethiopia's minorities, as in the Soviet national republics, might be a reasonable model to bring a modicum of justice to the Somalis in the Ogaden. She laughed and recounted a discussion she had with Mikhail Suslov on the same matter. When she alluded to Soviet nationality policy in a complimentary way, she claimed that Suslov responded in the following fashion: "Do you think our nationalities joined in the USSR because they wanted to? Oh no, we had to coerce them with great strength. We had to kill millions. That is how we created a union of Republics." No wonder the present rhetoric of the Soviet model for nationalities that goes on in Ethiopia sends so many tremors down the backs of Somalis.)

What does this rather extended discussion of superpower rivalries, regional enmities, and cultural peculiarities imply for American foreign policy? I should like to suggest five principles for U.S. policymaking in regard to Somalia, and to indicate how they differ, in emphasis, from the current policy:

(1) America's primary interest in the Horn is to see that regional warfare does not spill over into the Middle East conflict. The best way to insure regional peace is to provide a framework so that regional peace can be built on regional justice. American foreign policy has in the recent past sought peace by providing a delicately measured deterrent to Soviet-supported troops in Ethiopia. This is too short-sighted. Without regional justice, whatever the superpower designs,

warfare will come. Present policy only ensures that the level of violence—when war clouds again darken the Horn—will be greater, and more likely to spill over into the Middle East conflict.

(2) Justice in the Horn must mean that the Somali populations in the Ogaden live with dignity. American foreign policymakers have reiterated [*ad nauseam*] to President Siyaad that there will be no U.S. aid unless Somali regular troops remain outside of the Ogaden. They have privately told Siyaad that he should forget about the Ogaden and get on with the serious business of economic development. No Somali leader could forget about the Ogaden. But the political framework under which the Ogadenians live is, from the Somali point of view, negotiable. Thus there is a gambit for serious diplomacy.

(3) U.S. officials should emphasize to Somalia's leaders that the principle of self-determination as applied to the Horn runs counter to U.S. interests as a superpower. A world of regional wars seeking boundary adjustments is too unnerving for either superpower. The U.S. is not against the principle of self-determination for Somalis, the U.S. Ambassador could point out. Rather, the U.S. has an interest in seeking peace in all regions in which all parties respect the boundaries of the post World War II world. Until now, U.S. officials have emphasized too much what they think is best for Somalia. Somalis are capable enough to know their own interests. (If the discussion of Somali culture has any relevance here, it is that the richness and complexity of the Somali society should make Americans a little less self-assured that they can alter Somali perceptions of their own interests). U.S. officials can build on a firmer foundation if they provide explanations for U.S. policy based on U.S. interests.

(4) The potential impact of American military aid packages to Somalia should be examined as carefully in terms of internal enemies as it is now in inciting Ethiopia. It is quite clear that American-made weapons are being supplied to friendly clans to fight against other Somalis. The U. S. is increasingly perceived as a friend of Siyaad Barre and not as a friend of Somalia. Given the President's old age and the considerable degree of dissent in Somalia, America is less than prudent in identifying itself so closely with the incumbent President.

(5) The U.S. should continue to court Ethiopia, not because it is a bigger "catch" than Somalia (something that moved both Soviet and American policymakers at different times), but because a closer relationship with Ethiopia is consistent with our interests. If the Ethiopians are clear about American nonsupport for the principle of self-determination in the Horn, there may well come a time that they will become anxious to negotiate an agreement in the Ogaden, one that would provide government services, freedom, and dignity to all peoples who live in the Ogaden.

By no means is the U.S. on a collision course with the Soviet Union in the Horn. The U.S., under both Carter and Reagan, has acted with some prudence and recognized that the provision of massive military support to the Somalis could have engendered just the attack that the aid was designed to prevent. But the present trend, where a growing U.S. presence in Somalia is coupled with a stagnant diplomatic situation, is not acceptable. Without a clear movement towards the fulfillment of an agenda that takes into account not only Somali but U.S. interests in the Horn, we may well find ourselves again slaves to the agenda of one of our small allies.

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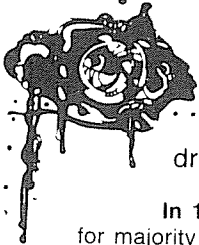
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SALIH BOOKER

A Black American in South Africa

"The shame of our nation is that it is objectively an ally of this monstrous (South African) government in its war with its own black people."

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

10 December 1965

Finally, I, a black American, had arrived in *apartheid* South Africa. I was one of four House of Representatives staff members sent to South Africa to analyze and interpret recent developments and assist the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa develop relevant and appropriate policy responses to events in that violently repressive country. This was my first visit to South Africa, the only nation in the world that constitutionally segregates people because of the color of their skin. Earlier, before working for Congress, I had been denied a visa several times. Our group—I being the only black—arrived in Pretoria on the evening of 15 August, 1984.

A country of some 31 million people—27 million black¹ and only 4.5 million white—South Africa is a totalitarian state ruled by the deeply entrenched white minority. It is a country of "law and order" where white supremacy is the *de jure* foundation for all political, social, and economic life in the country. The enforcement of laws upholding this racist order is carried out through massive and violent state coercion. The white minority has created a vast slave labor system whereby black people are denied any political rights, have no right to freedom of speech or assembly, no right to a fair trial, no right to travel freely in the country of their own birth, and no right to choose where they live or work. My visit to South Africa was not dissimilar to that of an American Jew visiting Nazi Germany during World War II.

As you ride from Jan Smuts airport or observe city scenes from your

Salih Booker, a staff consultant with the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa of the U.S. House of Representatives, recently paid a visit to the Republic of South Africa as part of a five-country study mission to southern Africa. This article reflects his own views and not the positions of the subcommittee or the full committee.