

September 14, 1977

**Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet
Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Ethiopian
Foreign Minister Feleke Gedle-Giorgis**

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Summary:

Ratanov and Giorgis discuss the reactions of various countries to the news of the Ethiopian Revolution. They also talk about the war going on with Somalia and various other events going on in the Horn of Africa.

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Memorandum of Conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, FELEKE GEDLE-GIORGIS
14 September 1977

On 14 September of this year, the Soviet delegation taking part in the celebrations of the occasion of the third anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution (comrade Yezhov, I.M.) had a meeting with Feleke Gedle-Giorgis.

During the course of a detailed conversation, after expressing his deep recognition to the Soviet Union for its comprehensive support and assistance to Ethiopia, the minister made the following statements:

Considering the extremely difficult situation in Ethiopia, particularly in connection with the military intervention by Somalia, the Ethiopian government is taking and will take measures which will aim to strengthen cooperation with states that support Ethiopia, to receive support from conservative regimes, and even to divide those states, including Arab states, which are openly hostile to the Ethiopian revolution. As a long-term goal, Ethiopia will even aim to restore contacts with Syria, Iraq, Sudan, et al.

As a whole, the positions of the overwhelming majority of the member-states of the OAU are favorable to Ethiopia as far as maintaining its territorial integrity is concerned, although many African states are not reconciled to the Ethiopian revolution and its socialist orientation. The OAU and the Committee created to provide good offices for the resolution of the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict continue their efforts to end it and come out on the side of Ethiopia. However, Sudan blocks their activities.

The position of Sudan is very duplicitous now: on the one hand, Sudan actively supports Eritrean separatism, on the other hand, it fears that in case of some form of secession by Eritrea, this would create a dangerous precedent which could encourage separatism in southern Sudan. Therefore Sudan appears to vacillate and Ethiopia intends to use this. Under these conditions Egypt encourages intervention by Sudan in Eritrean affairs and has sent 40,000 men to Sudan to exert influence on the Sudanese leadership and to show its (Egyptian) support in the event of the activation of the separatists in southern Sudan. This has enabled Sudan to send 4,000 of its own soldiers to Eritrea.

Ethiopia intends to activate its ties with the West European states, particularly with the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland, et al.), which haven't always formed a bloc with the main imperialist powers and, for example, took a position favorable to Vietnam during the period of American aggression. To this end, a mission to the aforementioned states is contemplated.

About the USA--the USA and other imperialist states aim to overthrow the Ethiopian regime (the minister claims that the USA has prepared a plot to do this). Despite this, the minister said, Ethiopia aims to use the contradictions among the Westerners in the interests of the Ethiopian revolution, and also the fact that officially the USA and other Western states have come out in support of the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and [express] the desire to have normal relations with it.

At the same time, the diplomatic activity of the PMAC will develop cooperation with communist and socialist parties of the USA and Western Europe (to this end the PMAC invited representatives of the communist parties of the USA, Italy, and Portugal to take part in the celebrations), and also with the international democratic, labour, women's and youth organizations (World Peace Council, Movement of Afro-Asian Solidarity, etc..).

The minister especially dwelled on the Chinese position on the Ethiopian revolution. At the beginning of the revolution, the PRC provided economic assistance to Ethiopia, and sent its economic experts. However, as the Ethiopian revolution deepened, the Chinese began to change their position, practically rendered comprehensive assistance to Somalia during the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict, and, it seems, intends to give it (Somalia) conventional battlefield weapons.

Recognizing the great significance of the diplomatic activity of the Soviet Union in support of Ethiopia, the minister expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would continue it in the future, and, in particular, would use its own friendly relations with Algeria and influence in the Arab world and with African states, and also with the communist and progressive organizations in Western, African, and Arab countries.

Feleke Gedle-Giorgis expressed his gratitude for the clear position of the USSR in the Somali-Ethiopian military conflict. In light of this, the minister emphasized that Ethiopia does not aim to dismember Somalia and does not intend to interfere in its internal affairs. The minister also said that Ethiopia supports the improvement of cooperation with Somalia. This being said, the Ethiopian government proceeds from the fact that Somalia has progressive forces, which are also striving for the restoration of neighborly relations and peaceful cooperation with Ethiopia.

For his part, comrade Yezhov, I.M. and the Soviet ambassador reaffirmed the position of the Soviet Union on the problem of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict and directed attention to the necessity of activating Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts in various countries. They reminded the minister of the diplomatic steps taken by the Soviet Union in support of Ethiopia (demarches towards the leaders of Somalia, a range of Arab states, et al.).

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
/s/ A. Ratanov