

September 29, 1977
**Memorandum of Conversation with Ethiopian
Foreign Secretary Dawit Wolde Giorgis, 17
September 1977**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation with Ethiopian Foreign Secretary Dawit Wolde Giorgis, 17 September 1977", September 29, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 129-134; translated by Bruce McDonald.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/110959>

Summary:

The memorandum concerns an Operation named Torch, which the United States was supposedly planning in order to destabilize the Ethiopian regime. It involved the arming of internal opposition groups with US weapons.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From diary of 29 September 1977A. P. Ratanov
Ser. No. 352 Memorandum of Conversation with Permanent Secretary of the
Foreign Ministry DAWIT WOLDE GIORGIS 17 September 1977 We received a visit
from Dawit at his request. Pursuant to instructions from the Chairman of the PMAC
[Mengistu], he furnished a document concerning an imperialist conspiracy against
Ethiopia designated by the code name "Fakel" [Torch], which was brought to the
attention of the ambassadors of the Socialist Bloc Countries at a meeting with Haile
Mariam Mengistu that took place on 10 September 1977. This document consists of a
summary presentation of instructions and telegrams, sent during the period of 12
February through 4 June of this year by the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi (under the
signature of D. Wardner, and later E. Kelly), to the American Embassies in Khartoum
and Dar-es-Salam. According to the document, the aim of perpetrating
"intervention and destabilization of circumstances in Ethiopia" is to be carried out by
three groups: (1) Nuba (2) Anyanya, to be carried out in the southwestern region of
Ethiopia (in the territory of the Sudan); and the third group consisting of "hostile
elements in southeastern Ethiopia" (in Kenyan territory). The training and arming of
these groups, primarily with American weapons, is to be carried out by 16 September
of this year. Commencement of operation "Fakel" is planned for 1 October 1977.
The starting point for all operations is to be the assassination, on 1 October of this
year, of the Chairman of the PMAC, as well as that of his Deputy, to be followed by an
attack by Groups 1 and 2 from Sudanese territory. Two weeks thereafter, an attack
by the third group from Kenyan territory is planned. The establishment of a third
front of military operations, as contemplated by the instigators of the plan, will lead
to an "automatic attack by Ethiopia on Sudan." In the event of a retaliatory attack on
Kenya, it is contemplated that the marines (the document does not specify of what
nationality) and forces of "other moderate countries" will be used. Attachment:
see four-page list appended hereto. AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR TO SOCIALIST
ETHIOPIA/s/ A. RATANOV cc: 3 AFO Defense Ministry, CC CPSU UOMP
UPVM 9/26/77