

June 1977

**Additions to 2 February 1977 Report by Third
African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry,
'Somalia's Territorial Disagreements with Ethiopia
and the Position of the USSR'**

Citation:

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Summary:

Additions to 2 February 1977 Report by Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, on "Somalia's Territorial Disagreements with Ethiopia and the Position of the USSR," regarding a meeting between Siad Barre, Mengistu and Castro and Siad's unwillingness to negotiate with Mengistu

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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Additions to 2 February 1977 Report by Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, on "Somalia's Territorial Disagreements with Ethiopia and the Position of the USSR," apparently in late May-early June 1977

[...] On 16 March 1977, a meeting took place in Aden between President Siad and PMAC Chairman Mengistu with the participation of Fidel Castro and the Chairman of the Presidential Council of South Yemen, Rubayi-i-Ali.

Mengistu appealed to Siad for the coordination of actions to rebuff imperialist and reactionary forces which simultaneously threaten both Ethiopia and Somalia. Siad held to an intransigent position, putting forth the annexation of the Ogaden to Somalia as an immutable condition for normalizing Somali-Ethiopian relations. He demanded that the issue of the transfer of the Ogaden to Somalia be quickly resolved, with the subsequent formation of a federation between Somalia and Ethiopia. At the meeting Siad declared that if the socialist countries would not support Somalia on the territorial issue, then he would be required to appeal to Arab and Western states for assistance.

The representative of South Yemen put forward a proposal to create a committee made up of high-ranking representatives of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Yemen, and Cuba for resolution of disputed Somali-Ethiopian issues. Siad refused to work in that committee. However, until now that proposal remains in force.

[...]

At a meeting of the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, N.V. Podgorny, with Siad Barre which took place at the beginning of April of this year during his brief visit to Somalia, Siad expressed readiness to continue the search for a mutually acceptable formula for resolving the problems facing Ethiopia and Somalia and requested the Soviet Union to provide help in organizing a meeting with Mengistu.

At Soviet-Ethiopian negotiations which took place during the official visit to the Soviet Union of the official Ethiopian delegation headed by the Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam during 4-8 May 1977, the Ethiopian side was informed of N.V. Podgorny's recent conversation with Siad Barre. In accord with the wish of President Siad, we proposed to Mengistu that through our good offices we organize and conduct in the Soviet Union a summit meeting for the establishment of good-neighborly relations between Somalia and Ethiopia. Mengistu accepted that suggestion with satisfaction and expressed agreement with the thoughts that had been expressed to him in this regard. However, in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on 17 May of this year, President Siad declared that he is not ready at the present time to sit at the negotiating table with Mengistu. [...]