

**August 23, 1977**

**Memorandum of conversation between Soviet  
Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov and Cuban  
Ambassador to Ethiopia Jose Perez Novoa**

**Citation:**

"Memorandum of conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov and Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia Jose Perez Novoa", August 23, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, ll. 118-119; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111859>

**Summary:**

Memorandum of conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov and Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia Jose Perez Novoa regarding the question of inviting Cuban military personnel to Ethiopia

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanov and Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia Jose Perez Novoa, 23 August 1977

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From the journal of 6 September 1977 Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 324  
MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION with the Cuban ambassador to Ethiopia  
JOSE PEREZ NOVOA  
23 August 1977

During the course of the conversation, which took place at the Soviet Embassy, Jose Perez Novoa, on his own initiative, opened the conversation with a question about sending Cuban military personnel to Ethiopia in accordance with Mengistu's request. After this he asked the following: "You had directed attention to the inappropriateness of the announcement by the leader of the Cuban military specialists in Ethiopia, Arnoldo Ochoa [to the effect that] 'you were right that the decision to send Cuban personnel to Ethiopia does not depend on Havana, but on Moscow.' This was the case, as the Cuban ambassador to Addis Ababa found out. Raul Castro, in the course of his recent consultations with Soviet leaders in Moscow, did not raise the issue of the possibility of sending Cuban military personnel to Ethiopia, and, consequently, A. Ochoa did not have any basis to make the aforementioned statement to Mengistu. We decided to tell you this because we would like our relations with Soviet comrades to be open and clear."

I thanked Jose Perez Novoa. Concerning the essence of the matter, I noted that the question of inviting Cuban military personnel is a difficult one not just for socialist states, but also for the leadership of the PMAC, in that the invitation of combat units from foreign powers, particularly non-African ones, could be used by Somalia and the Eritrean separatists to involve military personnel from the Arab states in military actions at much greater levels than is occurring now.

Jose Perez Novoa did not try to dispute the Soviet ambassador's statements. This time he also did not dispute the Soviet ambassador's statements about the necessity of working with the Ethiopian leadership to continue the Somali-Ethiopian negotiations in Moscow on an expert level.

In the course of the conversation Jose Perez Novoa assured that [he would convey] to all Cuban diplomats and specialists the instructions given to him about the necessity of clarifying the decisive importance of the assistance rendered by the Soviet Union to defend the revolutionary achievements of the Ethiopian people and the territorial integrity of the country.

USSR AMBASSADOR  
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA  
(signature) /A. Ratanov/

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1637, ll. 118-119; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]