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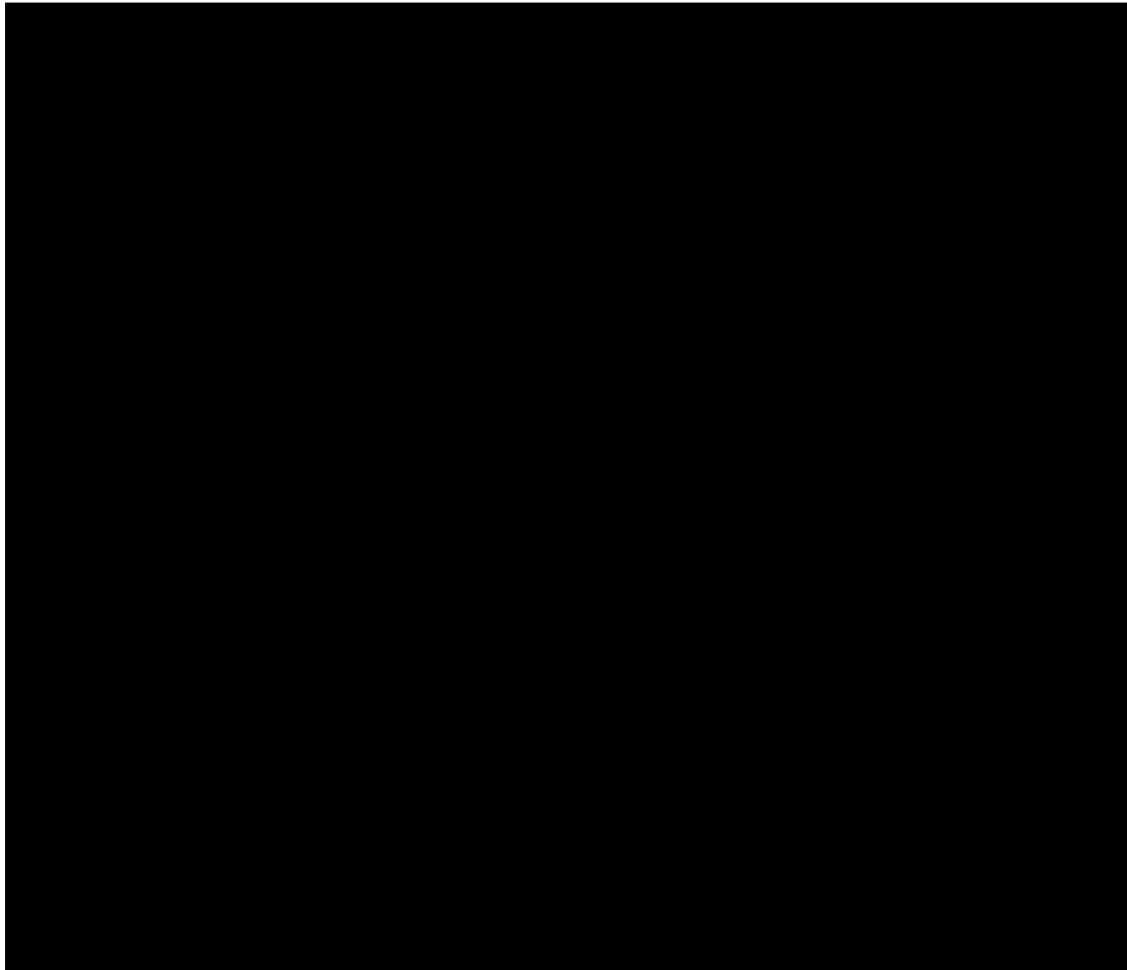
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
National Foreign Assessment Center  
March 6, 1978

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS OF A  
SOVIET WIN IN ETHIOPIA/SOMALIA

In response to the request of the NSC, the following assessment of the possible impact in the near term on the attitudes and actions of the principal countries or regional groupings of countries concerned with the Ethiopia/Somalia situation is submitted:

I.

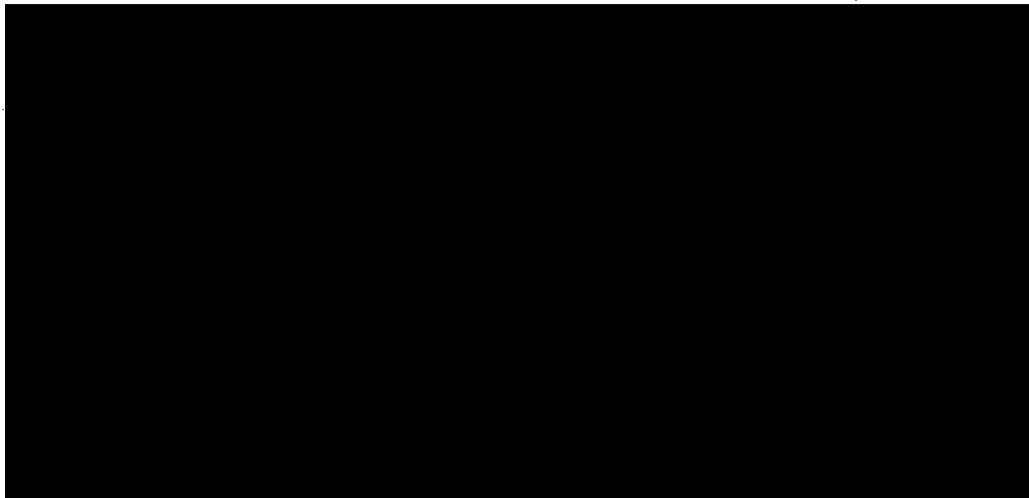


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II. Arab Confrontation States with Israel:



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Lebanon is too preoccupied to be concerned; and Syria is still adjusting its policies to the change of Soviet relationships in the Horn -- the Syrians have not yet swung around to support Ethiopia. The reinforcement of the Soviet position in the Horn is unlikely to alter the positions of any of these States any time soon.

III. Iran: The Shah's public warning that Iran supported the territorial integrity of Somalia has been eroded in recent weeks by the lack of US commitment. Iran probably feels too exposed in its contiguous location to challenge the Soviets without firm US backing. At the same time, it is clear that the Shah has never intended to be dependent on US support in the long run and hence it is unlikely that the US position in this Horn of Africa issue will alter his policies.

IV. Soviet Union: In embarking late last year on greatly expanded support for Ethiopia, the Soviets probably estimated the military risks as negligible and the political costs as modest and manageable. They have probably not substantially revised this estimate. They have seen signs of US concern mount in recent weeks, but probably

perceive it as lacking focus, expressing frustration more than a determination to act. They see the US as divided on the extent to which pressures should be brought to bear on the USSR outside the Horn. They probably believe the US has for several weeks accepted a Soviet/Cuban backed Ethiopian victory as a fait accompli and that Washington now regards a possible invasion of Somalia as a watershed event. They are almost certainly persuaded the US will not take action itself or mobilize others to act locally if there is no invasion of Somalia, and even if there is an invasion, they probably doubt that the US could put together a countervailing effort in timely fashion.

The Soviets probably prefer an outcome which does not include such an invasion, believing that without accepting any additional risks they will have already succeeded in achieving their local objectives and in reviving the credibility of their capacity to act as a global power in distant areas. Should large-scale fighting be ended in the next few weeks without an invasion of Somalia, the Soviet leaders probably think it most likely that there will be no serious further consequences for SALT or other major aspects of the bilateral relationship. They will continue, however, to watch carefully the impact of their Horn behavior on the public and Congress and on the correlation of forces inside the US government, which they see as now engaged in internal debate about US-Soviet relations. Meanwhile, they will look upon their Ethiopian achievement as advertising to revolutionary forces in southern Africa their readiness and capability to act, and as providing a springboard from which to seize other opportunities to expand their role in armed struggles should they appear.

- V. Ethiopia's Neighbors: Kenya is driven by its concern about a Somali invasion, though there is clearly an underlying concern at a continuing Soviet presence next door.

Sudan's opposition to Mengistu, expressed in material support for the Eritrean rebels and expressions of intent to support Somalia, has cooled in recent weeks; Nimeiry has reestablished contact with Mengistu. Having found it necessary in July 1975 to reduce the Soviet presence in Khartoum, Sudan clearly must be apprehensive at the sizeable Soviet presence next door, but is accommodating to the power realities.

- VI. Southern African States: Very little is heard from these states that would indicate that events in the Horn will influence their

policies. The Soviets, however, have reinforced the example of Angola in demonstrating their readiness and ability to provide effective military support to revolutionary movements.

VII.



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