

USSR-ETHIOPIA: Strains in Relations

Chairman Mengistu canceled a visit to Moscow last month four days before it was to begin [redacted] because the latest Ethiopian requests for arms had been rebuffed and General Secretary Andropov declined to receive him. [redacted] Mengistu intended to ask the USSR to cancel or delay payments on Ethiopia's \$3 billion arms debt. [redacted] Ethiopia cannot meet a payment of \$250 million due next year. The Soviet Ambassador says the visit might take place later this year, according to foreign diplomats in Addis Ababa. [redacted]

Comment: Relations have been troubled by Moscow's reluctance to supply the expensive weapons Ethiopia wants and by Addis Ababa's inability to repay its growing debt. Andropov's refusal to meet Mengistu might have been intended to keep pressure on him to follow Soviet military advice and to fulfill his commitment to establish an Ethiopian Communist party by next September. [redacted]

YUGOSLAVIA: Threats of a Purge

Party and military leaders are threatening to purge the ruling Communist Party to make it a more disciplined, centralized force. At the Central Committee plenum last week party president Markovic and secretary Stojanovic called for the ouster of all who impede passage of the economic austerity measures proposed for 1984 and the economic reforms recommended by a presidential commission last summer. Two days before the plenum, the chief of the Navy and Coastal Defense Command urged the party to purge leaders unable to carry out revolutionary goals. [redacted]

Comment: Some personnel shifts are likely soon. Regional bosses who tenaciously defend their positions against efforts to centralize decisionmaking appear most vulnerable. They are the most powerful contingent in the party, however, and have blocked previous efforts to centralize decisionmaking. Public expectation of major changes is growing, and failure to follow through on personnel and policy shifts would damage the credibility of the party and possibly strain relations between an increasingly impatient military and key federal leaders. [redacted]

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