

August 11, 1977
**Ethiopian Aide-Memoire to Soviet Officials in
Moscow**

Citation:

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Summary:

Ethiopian aide-memoire proposing grounds to end hostilities with Somalia.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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Delivered by the Ethiopian
delegation to the Soviet
delegation at the reception
on 11 August 1977
Translated from English

AIDE-MEMOIRE

1. During the course of discussions between comrades Mengistu Haile Mariam and Nikolai Podgorny in April 1977 in Moscow, the Soviet Union first came up with the idea for a joint meeting of the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia in an effort to diminish the possibility of conflict and create the preconditions which could lead to harmonious cooperation between the two states.

2. In mid-July 1977 the provisional military government of socialist Ethiopia received a communication from the Soviet ambassador in Addis-Ababa that the meeting would take place in Moscow on an expert level from 26-28 July 1977. The same communication noted that prior to and during the course of the meeting both Ethiopia and Somalia should refrain from any steps that would complicate matters. Ethiopia also received assurances that Somalia would not begin military actions.

3. On 23 July 1977, three days before the beginning of the Moscow meeting, Somalia began open and direct aggressive action against Ethiopia, thereby repudiating those very conditions necessary for the success of the meeting.

4. The Ethiopian delegation, headed by Major Berhanu Bayeh, of the permanent committee of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, came to Moscow at the appointed time to explain to the Soviet government that the situation that had arisen at that time as a consequence of Somalia's actions involved a range of factors which would have a negative impact on the proposed meeting, and, accordingly, that there was no practical purpose in holding such a meeting.

5. The Ethiopian delegation noted its surprise at the fact that Somalia insisted on discussing what it called the "territorial question." Ethiopia has no territorial dispute with Somalia; moreover, Ethiopia considers it inappropriate to hold talks under duress.

6. The working document that the Soviet Union presented to the Ethiopian delegation was studied attentively and delivered to Addis-Ababa. It was also taken into account that the situation which led to aggressive actions by Somali had not changed. The OAU's offer of its good offices to Ethiopia and Somalia at the Committee session from 5-8 August 1977 in Libreville, Gabon, is very significant; at the session a series of recommendations were passed, which resolved the following:

"1) Affirms resolution 16(1) and resolutions 27(2), obligating member-states, in accordance with the OAU charter, to respect the borders existing at the time of independence, and also to respect the basic principles of the inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member-states.

2) Calls on the sides of the conflict, Ethiopia and Somalia, in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Charter, to cease all military actions.

3) Affirms the non-agreement of the OAU with intervention by any foreign powers,

and, in particular, by non-African powers, in the internal affairs of member-states of the OAU; calls for the rejection of any non-sanctioned intervention in accordance with the decision of the XIV assembly of the heads of states and governments.

4) Calls upon all states to refrain from any actions which could be detrimental to the achievement of understanding between the sides in the conflict, increase tension and conflict, and threaten the peace, security, and territorial integrity of the two neighboring states.

5) Recommends in connection with the serious proposal by the executive organs of the president of the Committee of the OAU to offer its good offices to enter into contact with the heads of state of Ethiopia and Somalia in an effort to achieve a cease-fire and create a situation that would be conducive to the peaceful resolution of the problem."

7. Taking the aforementioned into account, it was decided that the Ethiopian delegation should take part in the Moscow discussions on the basis of the recommendations of the OAU, made in Libreville, and the Soviet working document consisting of the following ideas about the first steps necessary for the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia:

1) The two sides should refrain from the use of force to resolve their disputes. Measures should be taken to end military and other hostile actions.

2) The two sides should take steps to preserve peace and security on their borders.

3) They should refrain from hostile propaganda in the mass media against one another and stimulate efforts which would lead to the development of friendly relations.

4) The two sides should recognize the fact that continued tension between Somalia and Ethiopia is not in the interest of their peoples, and presents an obstacle to their combining forces in the struggle against the common enemy - imperialism.

5) The two sides should agree to the establishment and maintenance of contacts between them on various levels in the interests of achieving the stated goals.

It would be desirable to maintain the order of the points, as they were written in the working document.

8. The Ethiopian delegation hopes that agreement to the aforementioned will lead to a cessation of military actions as well as to the liquidation of the consequences of aggression in the context and spirit of the corresponding decisions of the OAU.

Translated by S. Berezhkov (signature)

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