

July 12, 1975
Telegram from Yugoslav Ambassador in Mogadishu
Hocevar

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<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134771>

Summary:

Belgrade's envoy to Mogadishu outlines the potential Somali rationale behind the invitation of Western observers to inspect Soviet facilities in Berbera. International attention surrounded the facilities following rumors and intelligence that the port was actually a military base.

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SFRY Embassy Mogadishu

240

12 July 1975

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Although many questions remain open as to the reason behind President Siad's invitation of the Americans, we estimate it was aimed at: demonstrating to the world that the friendly to the Soviet Union Somalia can retain control over all of its military installations, affirming its policy of independence and nonalignment, launching a constant speculation about the activities of the Soviet Union and preventing the danger of Somali isolation, especially in the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity and among the non-aligned countries. The Soviet Union took advantage of the ignorance of the locals, building military complexes according to its needs, which is taking a toll on this poor country's path towards true independence. The Americans initially treated Somalia as a "strategic property", and went with the knowledge of its difficult problems and the efforts undertaken by its leadership to overcome them. The result of the American, although humiliating, inspections: improving the Somali-American communication and hinting at the possibility of economic and humanitarian assistance in order to match the Soviet impact thus expanding the Somali leadership's room for manoeuvring.

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