

June 6, 1988

East German Ministry of State Security, 'The Current Situation in PDRE [People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia] and the Region'

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<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134784>

Summary:

Stasi report on the current state of Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict as of early June 1988. It concludes that in the event of Mengistu turning toward Moscow for additional arms supplies, the latter is likely to reject them in favor of a political solution to the conflict.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

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Content: The current situation in PDRE and the region

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[...]

5. Attitude of the USSR toward the resolution of the conflict in the north of the PDRE

In order to avoid Ethiopia's military defeat in the north, the Soviet Union responded to Mengistu's request for immediate and extensive delivery of military provisions and the all-round support in the transfer of the troops of the 1st army.

In connection with the development of the situation and the proven inability of Ethiopian armed forces to find a military solution, the Department head for Africa at the Soviet foreign ministry, Brutents, in personal talk with Mengistu expressed the Soviet Union's readiness to act as an intermediary between the Ethiopian leadership and the EPLF. This readiness was abruptly rejected by Mengistu as "interference of the supervisors in the internal affairs of the PDRE". Instead of such mediation, Mengistu asked for the USSR to intervene within the US and Arab states and to prevent the EPLF's external support, and thus isolate the EPLF internationally.

All the following attempts to orient Mengistu to the possibility of a peaceful conflict solution in the north were rejected by him in favor of the military solution. Mengistu plans a trip to China and the PDRK later this month to try to supply weapons from them. In the event of a possible rejection of his request, it should not be forgotten that Mengistu is again to address the USSR and the other socialist states. Soviet Union's current attitude, however, suggests that it will not agree with a continuation of deliveries of military goods, and is in favor of a political solution to the conflict.