

March 9, 1978
**Minutes of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting, 9 March
1978 (excerpt)**

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Summary:

The minutes focus on a meeting at which the Politburo is discussing a request by Siad Barre (leader of Somalia) to mediate the ongoing war with Ethiopia

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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MEETING OF THE CC
CPSU POLITBURO
9 March 1978

Chaired by Com. BREZHNEV, L.I.

Attended by Coms. Grishin, V.V., Kirilenko, A.P., Kosygin, A.N., Kulakov, F.D., Mazurov, K.T., Pel'she, A.Ya., Demichev, P.N., Kuznetsov, V.V., Ponomarev, B.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Riabov, Ia.P., Rusakov, K.V.

[. . .] 12. About Measures to Settle the Ethiopia-Somalia military conflict

BREZHNEV. All comrades, evidently, have read the last telegrams from Ethiopia and Somalia in relation to Siad Barre's request concerning our mediation. At first, Mengistu's reaction to the thoughts we expressed about that issue was basically positive. But he has promised to give a final response only after he will consult with his colleagues in the leadership. Thus far that response has not been received.

Siad Barre's reaction to the thoughts which we expressed to him in regarding his request suggests that he, as in the past, is playing a dishonest game. He obviously would like to leave some part of the forces in the Ogaden disguised as "patriotic detachments" and not to accept as a starting point for negotiations the principle of mutual respect, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-violation of borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another. He declares that these principles should be the subject of the subsequent negotiations.

On the other hand, Siad Barre's response in no way rejects the possibility of organizing a Somali-Ethiopian meeting, if Ethiopia will agree to it. Therefore, if Mengistu will give his consent to this meeting, then it seems expedient to continue our work aimed at organizing it. Simultaneously, it will of course be necessary to confirm to Siad Barre our principled approach regarding the withdrawal from Ethiopia of all Somali sub-detachments and about the principles of a settlement which are mentioned above.

I believe that it is necessary for us to continue working in this direction.

MFA USSR, the Committee of State Security, the Ministry of Defense and the International Department of the CC CPSU are assigned to continue working in the direction of a settlement of the military conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia and to submit possible proposals to the CC CPSU.