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**Soviet Foreign Ministry Background Report on
Soviet-Ethiopian Relations**

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Summary:

The report covers all aspect of relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union from 1974 onwards. It focuses on forms of cooperation and support for the country during its war with Somalia

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SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS
(Reference)

Diplomatic relations between the USSR and Ethiopia were established on 21 April 1943.

Soviet-Ethiopian political cooperation before the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 developed on the basis of the historical ties between the peoples of the USSR and Ethiopia, both countries' participation in the struggle against Fascism during World War Two, and also taking into account the positive position that Ethiopia held in the struggle against colonialism and racism, in the questions of strengthening global peace and international security.

Former Emperor Haile Selassie I visited the Soviet Union in 1959, 1967, 1970, and in 1973.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) announced its course for a Socialist orientation and its intention to develop comprehensive cooperation with the USSR after it came to power on 12 September 1974.

The Ethiopian leadership emphasized the fact that it saw the Soviet Union as the main source of their support internationally. The positions of the PMAC on the majority of major international problems coincide with or are close to those of the USSR.

In January 1975 the PMAC leadership raised in principle the question of developing Soviet-Ethiopian relations. It was announced by our side that the Soviet Union regarded sympathetically the measures taken by the PMAC for building a new society on progressive principles, and that we shared their opinion about the need to develop comprehensive contacts between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union.

Political relations. On 6-11 July 1976 an Ethiopian state delegation led by former Chairman Mogus Wolde Michael of the PMAC Committee of Ethiopia came to the Soviet Union on an official visit. The Soviet delegation at the negotiations was led by Comrade A.A. Gromyko. Members of the Ethiopian delegation were received by Comrade A.N. Kosygin.

On 4-8 May 1977 a state delegation of Ethiopia led by Chairman Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam of the PMAC came to the Soviet Union on an official friendly visit. Mengistu Haile Mariam was received by Comrade Brezhnev.

Soviet-Ethiopian negotiations in which the sides considered the status and the prospects for further development of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, the situation in Africa, and other international problems of mutual interest were held.

The sides adopted a Declaration of the Basis for Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the USSR and Ethiopia in the name of further strengthening of

Soviet-Ethiopian relations. A joint Soviet-Ethiopian communique was published on the results of the visit of the state delegation of Ethiopia to the USSR. During the visit the sides signed an Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, a Consular Convention, and the Protocol on Economic and Technological Cooperation of 6 May 1977.

On 30-31 October 1977 Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam of the PMAC of Ethiopia came to the USSR on a closed visit. During the conversation that Comrades L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin, and A.A. Gromyko had with him, it was emphasized that the USSR was going to continue to provide comprehensive assistance and support for the Ethiopian revolution in the future.

Comrades L.I. Brezhnev and Mengistu Haile Mariam repeatedly exchanged personal letters, which also contributed to a strengthening of bilateral relations.

An Ethiopian delegation led by member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC Berhanu Bayeh attended the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution [in November 1977].

In the difficult situation which emerged around revolutionary Ethiopia and in the country itself the Soviet Union has provided Ethiopia with constant political and diplomatic support, for which the leadership of Ethiopia has repeatedly expressed its deep gratitude.

Responding to the PMAC request to provide support for the peaceful settlement of the Eritrean problem the Soviet Union addressed several leaders of Arab countries and of Somalia on that issue. The Soviet Union has also made a presentation to the Iraqi government concerning the small transfers of Soviet-made weapons to the Eritrean separatists from Iraq through Sudan.

In the situation of the war unleashed by Somalia against Ethiopia and the occupation of a significant portion of its territory the Soviet Union took the position of decisive support of Ethiopia, and provided it with all kinds of assistance, including the assistance in strengthening its capability to defend itself. In our official statements and addresses to a number of African and Arab countries, and also in our contacts with the Western countries, we consistently advocated the necessity of an immediate cessation of the conflict by, first and foremost, an unconditional withdrawal of the Somali troops from the territory of Ethiopia.

In July-August 1977 the Soviet Union provided its good offices for the settlement of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict. However, during separate meetings with the representatives of both countries who came to Moscow it became clear that the two sides held uncompromising mutually exclusive positions. In those circumstances both delegations left for their countries, and the mission of good offices was suspended.

Party Contacts. At the request of the PMAC, 120 active members of the PMAC took courses on party building, organization of labor unions, women's and youth movements, solving nationality and other issues at the CC CPSU in the Soviet Union. In 1977, 50 people were accepted to those courses. In March 1978, a group of four Soviet party officials went to Ethiopia to assist the PMAC in creating a vanguard party of the working class.

Military Cooperation. In December 1976 in Moscow Ethiopia and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the transfer of some defensive weapons and military equipment from the Soviet Union to Ethiopia in 1977-1980. Upon request from the Ethiopian side part of the weapons was delivered immediately; and in February 1977 some rifles were supplied for the Ethiopian people's militia in form of gratuitous

assistance. We also gave our consent to the governments of CzSSR [Czechoslovakia], VNR [Hungary], PNR [Poland], and Cuba to supply Ethiopia with rifles produced under Soviet licenses, and to the government of the PDRY [People's Democratic Republic of Yemen] to transfer Soviet-made tanks and armored personnel vehicles to Ethiopia.

Later, after a new request from Ethiopia, the Soviet side made a decision additionally to supply Ethiopia with weapons and military equipment, and also with rifles for the People's militia in 1977-1980. In addition, we supply Ethiopia with technology for general civilian use, and Ethiopian servicemen have been accepted for study in the Soviet Union.

During the closed visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow in October 1977, the Soviet side agreed to provide urgently additional supplies of weapons and military equipment to strengthen the capability of Ethiopia to defend itself in the situation of the Somali aggression.

A group of Soviet military advisers and specialists currently works in Ethiopia.

A state delegation led by Army General V.I. Petrov has been staying in Ethiopia since November 1977 on a closed visit. The tasks of the delegation include devising measures jointly with the Ethiopian side to assist the PMAC in building the Ethiopian armed forces, for faster mastering of the Soviet military equipment by the Ethiopian army, and in the planning of military operations in the Ogaden and Eritrea.