

April 4, 1978

**Memorandum on Soviet Reaction to Libyan Proposal
on Somali-Ethiopian Conflict**

Citation:

"Memorandum on Soviet Reaction to Libyan Proposal on Somali-Ethiopian Conflict", April 4, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.
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Summary:

A memo prepared by the SED on a Libyan proposal for a political settlement of the Somali-Ethiopian war

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

SED Archives, Memorandum on Soviet Reaction to Libyan Proposal on Somali-Ethiopian Conflict, 4 April 1978 □The Soviet Ambassador in Tripoli received instruction to communicate the following to [Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Salam] Jalloud: The proposals of the Libyan leadership on the settlement of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict have been carefully examined in Moscow. We have communicated to the Ethiopians the recent Libyan desire to receive in Tripoli the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), based on the fact that only the Ethiopian side itself can make a decisions in this respect. The Ethiopian side had previously communicated to us that Mengistu could not come to Libya at the end of February for negotiations with Siad Barre, for reasons which the PMAC chairman told you personally. The Libyan side is aware of the Soviet position with respect to the procedure for a political settlement in the area of the Horn of Africa. We have fully explained our point of view during your recent visit to Moscow. There is only one just basis for the settlement of the conflict - this is the mutual respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in domestic matters of the other side. All attempts to achieve a political settlement on any other basis were bound to destabilize such a solution and burden it with new difficulties. The withdrawal of Somali troops from the Ogaden is only a step in the right direction, conditioned by the existing situation. The conditions for a settlement as officially announced by the Somali leadership, in our opinion, only served to postpone the start of negotiations. These conditions, as is known, touch upon the sovereign rights of Ethiopia and upon problems which lie in its domestic realm. The solution of the national question in the Ogaden belongs to this. One cannot disregard the fact that the USA and other Western powers, which verbally favor a settlement of the conflict at the Horn of Africa, in fact seek to make such a settlement more difficult in order to strengthen their position in this area. In our opinion the main task now is to put the settlement of the conflict at the Horn of Africa on the tracks of peaceful negotiations. The solution of this problem can not depend on whether Ethiopia and Somalia can achieve agreement on all other problems in their relationship. It is now especially important to influence the Somali leadership to assume a constructive position and to avoid giving the imperialist and other reactionary forces the opportunity to exploit Somalia for their designs. With respect to the situation in Eritrea, the Soviet Union has viewed and still views this in conformity with the UN and OAU resolutions as an internal Ethiopian matter. We favor a political solution of this question by negotiations between the central government and the Eritrean organizations. It is our strong conviction that the current attitude of the Eritrean organizations which favor the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia contradicts the interests of the Ethiopian Revolution and the progressive forces in this area and is only of advantage to the imperialists and the reaction. Libya and other progressive Arab states can use their authority and influence to convince the Eritrean organizations to terminate the fighting and go the way of a peaceful solution of the Eritrean problem in the framework of a unified Ethiopian state.[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]