

August 5, 1977

**Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov,
Memorandum of Conversation with Mengistu**

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Summary:

Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov, Memorandum of Conversation with Mengistu regarding Ethiopian responses to Somali actions and the Soviet role in providing supplies to Ethiopia

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Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov, Memorandum of Conversation with Mengistu, 5 August 1977

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RECORD OF CONVERSATION

with Chairman of the PMAC of Ethiopia

MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM

5 August 1977

I visited Mengistu at his invitation (Berhanu Bayeh, a member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC, also took part in the conversation).

After thanking the Soviet Union for rendering assistance to Ethiopia, including the decision about the delivery of trailers, helicopters, and vehicles, Mengistu asked me to convey the following to the Soviet leadership and to comrade Brezhnev in particular:

The PMAC has attentively studied the advice in comrade L.I. Brezhnev's reply, and will follow it, in particular: to aim for the political resolution of Ethiopian-Somali differences. On August 8, Berhanu Bayeh, as well as governmental advisers Mikael Imru and Getachew Kibret, will fly to Moscow to continue negotiations with the Somali delegation.

Despite this, Mengistu continued, Somalia is continuing its escalation of military actions against Ethiopia. At present it is conducting systematic bombing raids on cities in the Ogaden (Dollo - on the border with Kenya), and the PMAC is anticipating that Harar, Dire-Dawa, etc. will be bombed. As a consequence of these bombing raids, industrial and agricultural firms and infrastructure are being destroyed. Thus far Ethiopian air forces have limited their bombing raids to Somali tanks and artillery, and air battles with Somali planes, and has refrained from bombing Somali cities because this would create a major military conflagration in this region. We do not intend to attack Somalia, Mengistu emphasized.

In connection with his statement, Mengistu requested that the Soviet government consider taking additional measures to influence Somalia, even some type of economic sanctions, and at the same time convey to the Somali government that Ethiopia is prepared to hold talks with Somalia with the participation of the Soviet Union. What is important now is to bring about a halt in Somali air attacks because these attacks demoralize the army as well as the peaceful population and could cause a political crisis in the regime.

In conclusion Mengistu requested that he be kept informed of possible steps that the Soviet Union would take.

During the course of the negotiations, the Soviet ambassador informed Mengistu about the decision of the Soviet government to deliver trailers for the transport of tanks, helicopters, and vehicles, from the port of entry to their destinations.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA
(signature) /A. RATANOV/

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 127-128; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]