

June 1988

**East German Ministry for State Security, 'On the
Position of the Army in the Political System of
Ethiopia**

Citation:

"East German Ministry for State Security, 'On the Position of the Army in the Political System of Ethiopia", June 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Die Behörde des Bundesbeauftragten für die Stasi-Unterlagen (BStU) [Berlin], MfS HA I 13935, ss. 149-157. Obtained and translated by Radoslav Yordanov.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/134783>

Summary:

Excerpt of a Stasi report on the Ethiopian army. This portion of the report deals with the Army's dissatisfaction with the quality of the Soviet Union's armaments; the East German material ponders how much of this is part of anti-Soviet sentiment, and how much is due to their professional incapacity.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

On the position of the army in the political system of Ethiopia
On the situation in the army

[c. June 1988]

[...]

Relationship between the leadership of the Ethiopian army and the Soviet Union/Socialist states

The relationship between the leadership of the Ethiopian forces and the Soviet Union and the Socialist states is mainly determined by the close ties with the Soviet Union, the use of Soviet military equipment and technology, and the constant use of some 1,000 Soviet military advisors. This is also the case with the other socialist states.

At the same time, however, in some instances the military leadership's is showing weaknesses and failures in using Soviet armament and technology. In so doing, they also differentiate between the socialist states and try to find support for their own position.

In this connection, it is not established whether such cases are based on an anti-socialist position or on the concealment of their own incapacity. An example of this is a meeting at the Ministry of Defense, with the participation of Mengistu, where it was maintained that the supply of weapons and equipment was inadequate. The lack of replacement parts was criticized, which is why the technology had to be brought to the Soviet Union for repairs. Moreover, the supplied Soviet technology was dated. It was suggested this was a deliberate attempt on part of the USSR to maintain dependency. An anti-Soviet background is thus unmistakable.

It is characteristic that such statements are not official and that a certain influence of imperialist propaganda becomes visible or is consciously or unconsciously supported.

Based on the current balance of forces and the process of differentiation in the leadership, it must be assumed, even if there is no evidence, that there are forces which demonstrate a close relationship with the SU / SSG but whose basic attitude is pro-Western.

[...]