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Director of
Central
Intelligence

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The Ogaden Situation

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

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NI IIM 80-10007

7 April 1980

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THE OGADEN SITUATION

Information as of 7 April 1980 was used in the preparation of this paper.

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SCOPE NOTE

This Interagency Intelligence Memorandum is intended to be a review of the historical development of the current situation in the Ogaden leading up to an assessment of the possible future course of the military situation in light of the continuing conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogaden. The growing level of conflict over the past six to nine months and the introduction of growing numbers of Somali regular forces give rise to heightened concern in light of the expressed American interest in military facilities in Somalia. The period covered by this assessment is the next two to three years.

This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Africa. It was drafted by analysts in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, in the Defense Intelligence Agency, and in the Central Intelligence Agency. It was coordinated at the working level with representatives of those agencies and the Army.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

Since Somalia became independent in 1960, Mogadishu has intermittently supported and directed insurgency in the Ogaden. In recent years the Somali Government seems to have exercised fairly close control over the insurgents.

Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden in July 1977 was an attempt to capitalize on the weakness of revolution-torn Ethiopia. Somali leader Siad's decision may also have been prompted by the judgment that the newly established Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship would eventually shift the military balance against Somalia.

Although the Somalis took most of the Ogaden in two months, their military effort had serious weaknesses. They apparently lacked a coherent strategic plan and suffered from severe logistic constraints. The most decisive factor in the Somali defeat, however, was the intervention of Ethiopia's new allies, the Soviet Union and Cuba. The Soviets provided massive military assistance. A Cuban expeditionary force of 17,000 provided the cutting edge for the Ethiopian counteroffensive which drove the Somali Army from the Ogaden in March 1978.

Since the end of the conventional war, the Ogaden insurgency has undergone phases of varying intensity. Beginning roughly in mid-1979, the fighting intensified. By November 1979 and possibly earlier, regular Somali units had began operating in the Ogaden. At present, we believe that six [redacted] battalions are operating there (some 3,000 to 4,000 men). We have no basis at this point for judging whether the deployment of regular units into the Ogaden will be sustained at present or higher levels.

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We believe that the upsurge in fighting is related to Siad's calculations about the battlefield situation and the wider political environment:

— The regular units are intended to bolster guerrilla capabilities, prevent the Ethiopians from consolidating control near the border, and guard against a possible direct attack on Somalia.

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— Ethiopian setbacks in Eritrea and elsewhere probably reinforce Siad's long-held belief that Ethiopia is disintegrating.

— Siad wants to discourage the guerrillas' interest in an independent Ogaden state, prevent them from fragmenting along tribal lines, and counter attempts by Ethiopian-supported dissidents to exploit tribal discontent in the borderlands.

It is doubtful that Siad will reduce his commitment to the Ogaden insurgency for the foreseeable future. The backing that virtually all Somalis give the irredentist cause and the destabilizing potential of an armed force the size of the guerrillas give him little choice. His ultimate goal remains the annexation of the Ogaden. For tactical reasons he might, as an interim measure, accept internationally guaranteed autonomy for the Ogaden, but there is no sign that Ethiopia is prepared to grant such a concession.

The fighting in the Ogaden will therefore go on. Because of resource limitations on each side, the cyclical pattern of hostilities will not necesarily result in a major war. But with the reintroduction of Somali regular units, we cannot exclude the possibility of major battles between regular forces as a result of miscalculation or misperception.

The Somalis would perceive (and eventually derive) advantage from a new relationship with the United States. Somali capabilities would be markedly improved by arms and training assistance. US military aid might not immediately affect the pattern of hostilities in the Ogaden, but it would be a psychological boost for Siad and might encourage him to step up support for the insurgents. On the other hand, if Siad should become disappointed with US arms aid, he would likely use Arab offers of military assistance as a bargaining chip.

We doubt that arms aid would give the United States much leverage over Siad on the Ogaden issue. We believe that he would be equally prepared to launch another conventional war if he thought that the balance of forces had shifted substantially in his favor. But it is possible that at some future point Siad might decide to wind down the insurgency temporarily, for expedient reasons.

If fighting stays at about present levels, the Soviets and Cubans probably will confine themselves to support activity within Ethiopia. If it markedly intensifies, Havana might expand the size of its forces and approve an expanded combat role for them within the Ogaden, and Moscow probably would provide Ethiopia with more arms and advisers.

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Increased fighting could lead to a stepped-up Ethiopian campaign of sabotage and terrorism against Somalia and a widening of Ethiopian airstrikes that could cause collateral harm to any US installations and personnel in Somalia. In addition, the Ethiopians if Somalia again invaded, would exercise the right of "hot pursuit" into Somalia.

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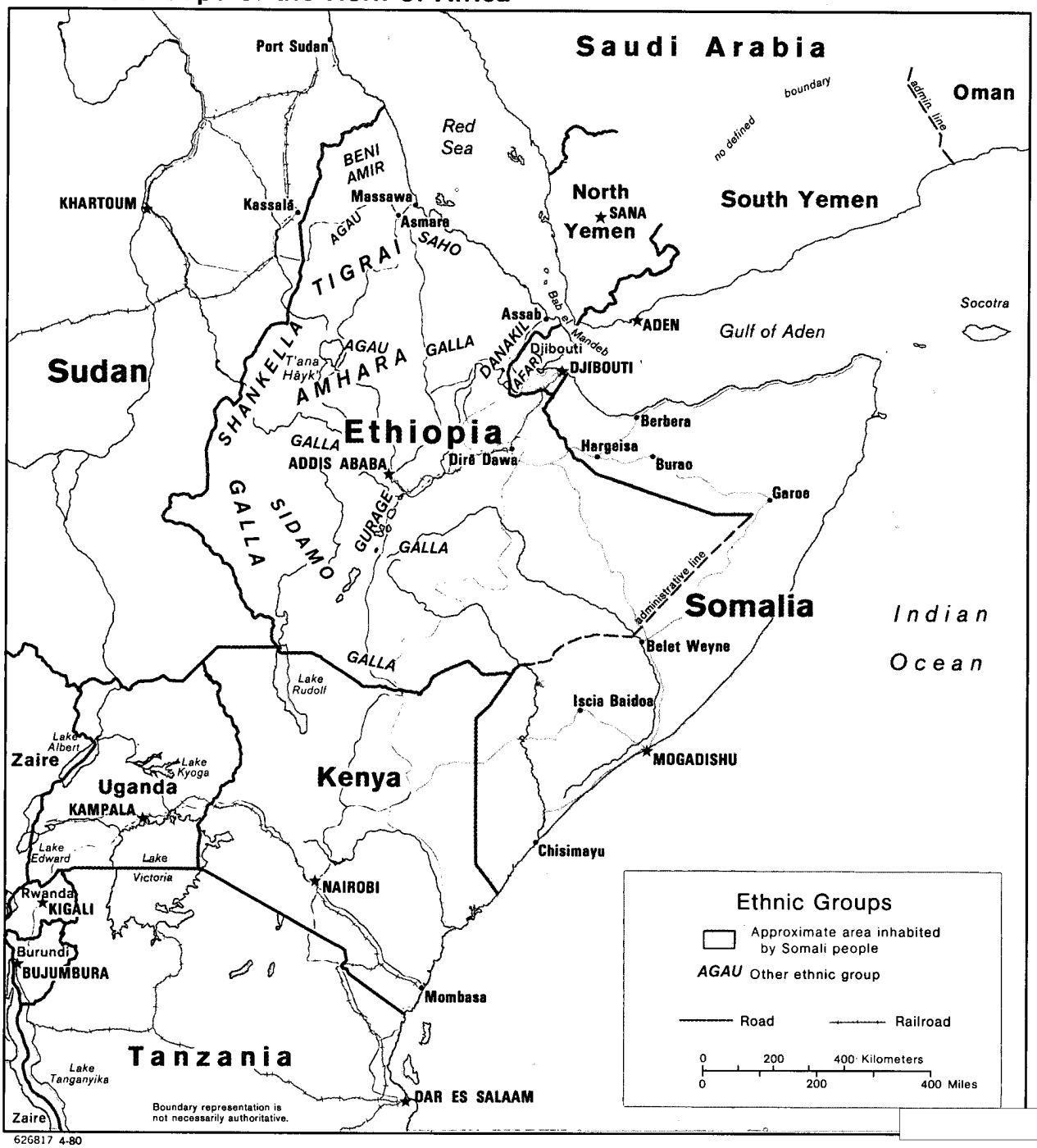
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Ethnic Groups of the Horn of Africa



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DISCUSSION

I. THE BACKGROUND OF THE OGADEN PROBLEM

1. The Ogaden problem is a modern manifestation of a centuries-old struggle between Christian highlanders and Muslim lowlanders in the Horn of Africa. It is also a conflict between an African state that stresses the principle of territorial integrity and an African nation that stresses self-determination and regards the Ogaden as a "colonial" issue. Finally, the dispute centers on the ecological interrelationship between Somalia and the Ogaden rangelands, which are an integral part of Somalia's economy and social system.

2. The roots of the contemporary Ogaden problem go back to the late 19th century expansion of Ethiopia into the Ogaden, which up to that time had only rarely experienced Ethiopian overlordship. This expansion (to Ethiopia's approximate present boundaries) received international recognition from European powers (Britain, France, and Italy), which were then colonizing along the Somali coast, in a set of treaties signed in 1897. (See map on next page.)

3. Ethiopia came under the rule of Mussolini's Italy from 1936 until 1941, and the Ogaden was absorbed into Italian Somaliland. During the interwar period Rome had stimulated the emerging sense of nationalism among Somalis living under the different flags of the colonizers and abroad in exile and had used this nationalism and Islam as weapons to help subjugate Ethiopia. In 1941, British forces defeated the Italians in East Africa. The Ogaden came under British rule and continued to be administered as part of Italian Somaliland.

4. The cause of Somali nationalism was taken up by the British during their military administration of the Horn from 1941 until 1950. London favored the creation of a new state within the British Commonwealth that would unify all Somali-speaking peoples—a Greater Somalia. But the concept foundered on Allied opposition to what was regarded as British imperial expansion, the diplomatic skills of Emperor Haile Selassie (who played on Allied guilt feelings over the League of Nations' failure to prevent Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia), and the refusal of the financially strapped postwar British Government to allocate funds. In 1948 London returned the Ogaden to Ethiopia (with the exception of the Haud pasturelands adjacent to British Somaliland, which were not returned until 1954).

5. The United States was initially a bystander in the Anglo-Ethiopian tug of war over the Ogaden, but gradually became more involved. In 1944, Washington had favored Ethiopian concessions on the Ogaden in return for agreement on a US proposal to give all or part of Eritrea to Ethiopia. But the US position began to change after Sinclair Oil Company signed a concessionary agreement with Haile Selassie in 1946 permitting oil exploration in the Ogaden. By 1948, Ethiopia had assumed a strategic importance in US global strategy.

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This laid the foundation for a US-Ethiopian military and political relationship that Haile Selassie strongly desired as a shield against his foreign enemies.

6. The British revived the plan for a Greater Somalia in the late 1950s, but once again met opposition from Ethiopia, France, and Italy—and, implicitly, the United States. London was able only to bring about the merger of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland (an Italian UN Trust Territory from 1950 until 1960) into the state of Somalia, which became independent in 1960.

7. In 1963, at the founding meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Haile Selassie strengthened his hold on the Ogaden by using his stature as one of Africa's senior statesmen to win the organization's endorsement of existing colonial boundaries and to relegate Somalia to an "odd man out" position in inter-African affairs.

8. The result is an Ethiopian-Somali boundary that Somalia does not recognize. Mogadishu claims that the 1897 treaties violated treaties signed in the 1880s between the Europeans and various Somali clans. Further, the 1897 treaties' definitions of borders are vague and contradictory. (The Ethiopian border with

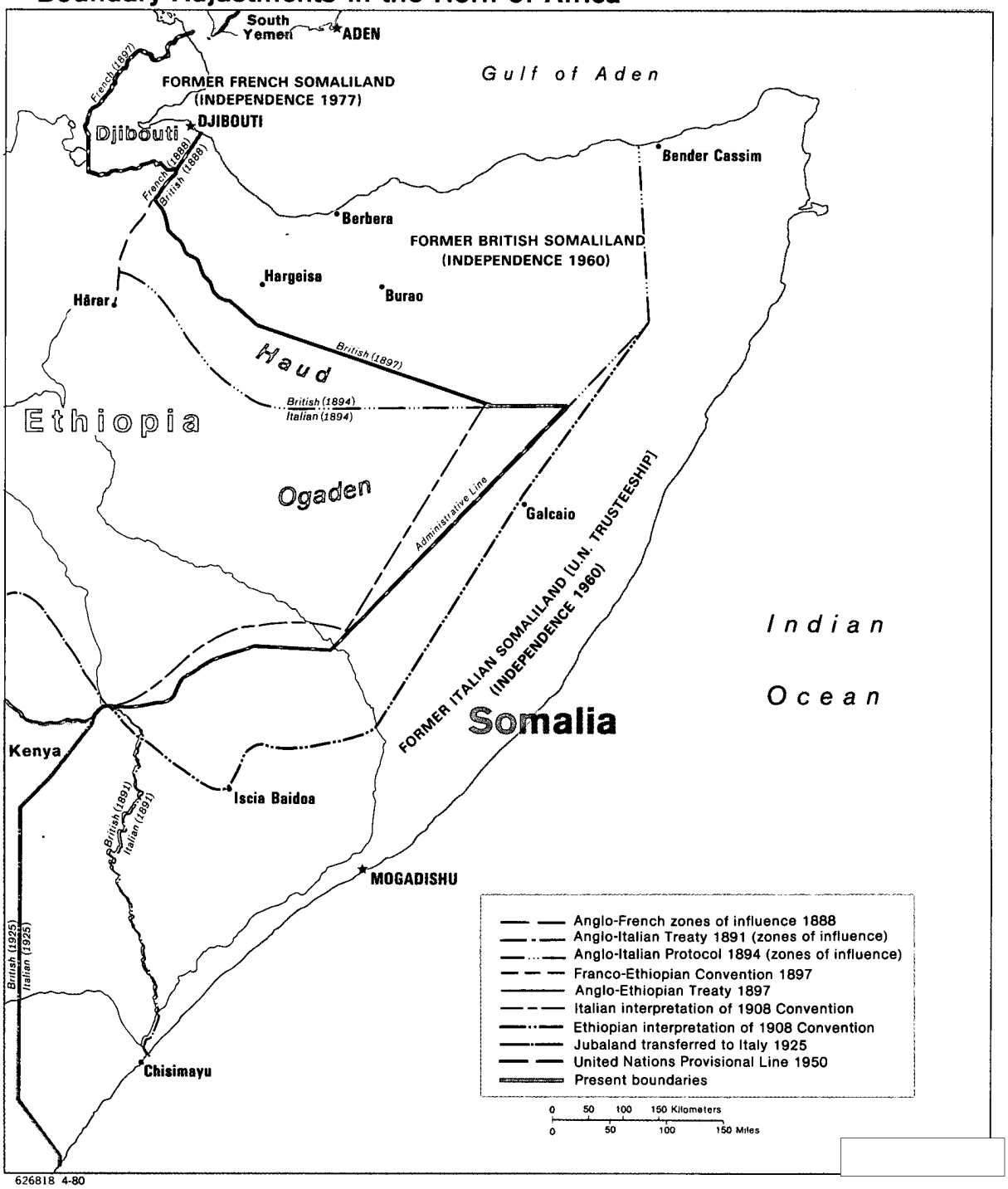
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Boundary Adjustments in the Horn of Africa



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Italian Somaliland had never been defined and remains a provisional administrative line. Ethiopia and Italy failed in an attempt to define it during 1955-60, despite UN and US pressure.) In addition, Somalia claims—with justification—that Ethiopia never effectively administered large parts of the Ogaden until the last 25 years.

9. The existence of an independent Somali state championing a Pan-Somali ideology led to an insurgency in the Ogaden in 1963-64. It is unclear whether the insurgency was spontaneous or was ordered by Mogadishu. In any case, the Ogadenis had reasons of their own to revolt. Although Haile Selassie had made a few attempts to co-opt the local leadership, the Ethiopians distrusted Somalis as Muslims, largely excluded them from the government and military, and in general treated the Ogaden as an occupied territory. A major grievance was Ethiopian taxation of Somali seasonal migrants into the Haud pasturelands. A more fundamental source of discontent was the deterioration of the Ogaden's ecology over the past 40 years that seems to have stemmed partly from political interference with grazing patterns. The resultant overgrazing may have stimulated friction that contributed to the insurgency.

10. The insurgency briefly escalated into a border war in early 1964. In April 1964, the OAU negotiated a cease-fire, established a demilitarized zone 10 to 15 kilometers deep on both sides of the border, and created a joint commission on border incidents.

11. By the mid-1960s, Mogadishu developed second thoughts about its active pursuit of irredentist goals. The Ogaden fighting and another insurgency in northeastern Kenya that had begun in 1963 had siphoned off resources needed for economic and social development. Moreover, Somalia had failed to win international support for its cause. Despite Soviet military aid that began in 1963, Moscow refused to support the irredentist claims. In addition, Soviet arms aid was inadequate to change the military balance in the Horn in Somalia's favor. Mogadishu's other major supporter—Nasser's Egypt—lost most of its interest in the Horn after the defeats of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Within Africa, Somalia was isolated. Finally, Mogadishu hoped for economic aid from the United States, which was trying to mute the Ogaden conflict by encouraging an expanded association of East African states.

12. Through the good offices of Presidents Nyerere of Tanzania and Kaunda of Zambia, a detente was arranged between Somalia and its neighbors toward the end of the 1960s. Agreements were signed with Kenya in 1967 and with Ethiopia in 1968 that provided for the ending of the state of emergency in the border areas and improvement of political and economic relations. Detente survived General Mohamed Siad's military takeover of Somalia in 1969 and lasted until early 1973, when a spate of border incidents (triggered by stepped-up Soviet arms deliveries to Somalia and reports of oil discoveries in the Ogaden) led to renewed and largely ineffective OAU mediation. Siad signaled that he had only deemphasized the irredenta until he could consolidate his political control and rearm his military.

II. THE OGADEN WAR: 1977-78

Somali Goals and Objectives

13. Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden in July 1977 was an attempt to capitalize on the weakness of revolution-torn Ethiopia. The very survival of revolutionary leader Mengistu's regime appeared to be threatened not only by the Ogaden insurgency but also by rebel advances in Eritrea and by the opposition of other dissident movements. Ethiopian military capabilities had declined because of defeats by the insurgent groups, purges, low morale within the armed forces, and the ending of the military supply relationship with the United States in April of that year.

14. Perceiving Ethiopia's vulnerability, Siad sought a quick decision in the Ogaden. He may have hoped that a stunning defeat would bring down Mengistu, leading to either an effective dissolution of Ethiopia or to a successor regime willing to concede Somalia's territorial claims in the face of its military success. Somalia would then absorb the Ogaden or set up a puppet state. Siad's decision to act quickly may have been prompted at least partially by the judgment that the nascent Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship—arms aid agreements had been signed between Moscow and Addis Ababa in December 1976 and May 1977—would eventually lead to a shift in the military balance against Somalia or at best the establishment of parity between the two forces.

The Somali Government's Relationship With the Guerrillas

15. Although guerrillas had operated in the Ogaden for years, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was created in 1975 by the Somali Govern-

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ment to strengthen its control over them and make them more responsive to Somali policy. From its inception the WSLF obtained virtually all of its training, arms, supplies, and funds through the Somali Government. Siad tightly controlled the WSLF political leadership, replacing those who opposed his policies, and assigned Somali National Army (SNA) cadres to the guerrilla forces.

16. Somali control over guerrilla operations was tenuous, however. The guerrillas preferred to engage in raids that often had little to do with Somali tactical or strategic objectives. Predictably, the guerrillas did poorly in set-piece battles with the Ethiopians. By late 1976, the Somalis attempted to remedy this situation by intermittent introduction of small SNA specialist, artillery, and reconnaissance units into the Ogaden. The WSLF gradually stepped up its attacks on the isolated, poorly equipped garrisons in the southern and eastern Ogaden, attacks that the Ethiopians were increasingly unable to counter.

The Outbreak of War

17. In June 1977, WSLF guerrillas destroyed key bridges on the Djibouti–Addis Ababa rail line near Dire Dawa. The WSLF, aided by some regular Somali military and paramilitary elements, then mounted widespread attacks in early July, which were unsuccessful. The failure of the WSLF to achieve decisive results precipitated Siad's decision to invade the Ogaden. Regular Somali armor and mechanized units entered the battle in late July, and by mid-September had captured the key town of Jijiga. Within two months, the Somali forces had taken most of the Ogaden region.

18. The Somalis scored these successes because they enjoyed a local superiority in equipment, morale, and numbers, including guerrillas. (During the war the guerrillas were absorbed into the SNA.) From the start, however, the Somali forces suffered from a number of weaknesses that were to be factors in their subsequent defeat:

— Other than the goal of taking the Ogaden, the Somalis seemed to have had no well-thought-out tactical or strategic plan. Attacks were launched impulsively as opportunities and resources permitted rather than with a coherent objective in mind, more often than not merely forcing Ethiopian units back rather than capturing or destroying them.

— Lengthening supply lines and logistic weakness forced the Somalis to fight by fits and starts—a few days of attacks followed by days or even weeks of building up resources. This gave the Ethiopians time to augment their forces. Moreover, the Somalis could not replace major equipment losses because of their lack of foreign support and, after November 1977, the ending of Soviet arms aid.

— Somalia lost the air battle early on and, with the later introduction of Soviet aircraft and Cuban pilots, found its supply lines, especially in the northern Ogaden, under day and night attack.

The most decisive factor contributing to the Somali defeat was, however, the intercession of Ethiopia's newfound allies—the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Soviet-Cuban Involvement

19. Although the Soviet-Somali military relationship dates from 1963, Soviet arms shipments to Somalia stepped up after Siad seized power in 1969, the same time that the Soviet Navy began to seek access to Indian Ocean facilities. Cuban economic and military aid to Somalia began in the early 1970s. But the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 aroused Soviet and Cuban interest. By late 1976, Moscow had decided to play both sides in the Horn by giving military aid to Addis Ababa, and Cuban military adivsers arrived in Ethiopia in the spring of 1977.

20. Siad invaded the Ogaden in the face of Soviet disapproval. Moscow's hope of arranging a political settlement of the dispute between its two clients led to an initially cautious Soviet reaction. In August 1977 the Soviet tilt toward Ethiopia became pronounced as the Soviets publicly criticized Somali aggression, and Siad returned from a trip to Moscow emptyhanded. Soviet arms flowed into Ethiopia, while Soviet arms to Somalia were reduced to a trickle. On 13 November, concluding that Moscow had sided irreversibly with Addis Ababa and probably under heavy pressure from his Army, Siad expelled Soviet and Cuban advisers and broke relations with Havana. He also hoped that this would improve his prospects of acquiring Western arms aid.

21. Immediately after the expulsion, Soviet arms shipments to Ethiopia expanded dramatically. Following the visit of a high-level Soviet delegation to Addis Ababa in mid-November, a Soviet airlift delivered some 1,300 tons of cargo (primarily combat aircraft)

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between then and April 1978. During the same period Soviet and allied ships delivered over 100,000 tons of military equipment—worth on the order of half a billion dollars. Soviet deliveries during this period nearly tripled the size of the Ethiopian arms inventory—with generally more modern, sophisticated equipment than the Ethiopians had hitherto possessed. To help Ethiopia operate and maintain this equipment the Soviets sent more than 1,000 of their own advisers and technicians.

22. Equally decisive was the intervention of 17,000 Cubans, mainly combat troops, who provided the cutting edge for the Ethiopian counteroffensive. Cuban pilots flew combat air missions, while troops manned one mechanized and two armored brigades, and performed support functions.

The Ethiopian Counteroffensive

23. Because of this massive foreign support the tide was turned against Somalia. Ethiopian and Cuban units broke the siege of Harar in late January 1978. After building up logistic support, flying preparatory airstrikes, and gradually expanding their control of the territory north of Jijiga, they mounted a major offensive, recapturing the city in March.

24. Somali troops, who had been putting up stiff resistance to the Cuban-Ethiopian forces, retreated to the south and east. Under pressure from air and ground attacks, the retreat in the north became a rout. The Somali troops fled across the border, leaving most of their major equipment behind. Faced with an untenable military situation, Siad ordered a withdrawal from the rest of the Ogaden on 9 March. This withdrawal was orderly with little loss of equipment or personnel.

Outcome

25. Siad gambled on a quick victory in the Ogaden and lost. Somali success was predicated on the assumptions that: (1) the Ethiopians would not recover from the shock of early and decisive Somali victories; (2) the Soviet Union and Cuba would remain neutral or at least fail to respond in time to aid Ethiopia; (3) Somalia would attain its objectives with only light losses, or at any rate before its resources were depleted. All three assumptions proved to be basically false, and Somali defeat was thus assured.

26. The Somali armed forces were left with no capability for large-scale conventional offensive action and only limited defensive capability. Although Somali manpower losses were relatively small considering the scope of their defeat, they lost more than a third of their heavy equipment. Much of what remained was inoperable because of wear and tear and a lack of spare parts.

III. MARCH 1978 UNTIL THE PRESENT

27. Since the end of the conventional war, the Ogaden insurgency has undergone phases of varying intensity, reflecting not only Mogadishu's perceptions of opportunities to be exploited, but also the complex relationship between the Ogaden insurgency and Somali domestic politics, and considerations of Somali foreign policy. Since roughly mid-1979, the war has intensified and regular Somali units have once more gone into the Ogaden.

Renewal of Insurgency

28. On 9 March 1978, Siad ordered the withdrawal of the SNA from the Ogaden. The Ethiopians were briefly in control of the Ogaden for the first time since late 1975. An unknown number of guerrillas remained inside the Ogaden, although they were initially in disarray. Cuban combat units were subsequently withdrawn from border areas, and Ethiopia's best fighting units were sent to Eritrea.

29. By early May the insurgents had been reorganized and resupplied by Mogadishu, and once again started to harass Ethiopian units and supply lines. Siad's decision to renew the insurgency at this juncture—despite US offers of military aid if he would desist—was made largely for internal reasons, particularly concern for his own survival. He faced several challenges—from dissident tribal groups and elements which had been uneasy with the Soviet connection and sought an opening to the West. These groups had long disliked Siad and now sought to blame him for the Ogaden debacle.

30. Siad moved quickly to wrap himself in the Somali flag by renewing support for the insurgency. He reestablished the command linkages between the SNA and the insurgents that had existed before the war and again seconded individual Somali regular soldiers to fight with the insurgents. But he eschewed the use of SNA units in the Ogaden.

31. On 18 June 1978 the insurgents cut the Addis Ababa–Djibouti rail line after it had reopened following its closure a year earlier. In retaliation, the Ethio-

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pian Air Force hit targets in the border region of northern Somalia—the first air raids into Somali territory since the end of the war. These continued periodically through December 1978.

32. From the late summer of 1978 into early 1979, the center of action shifted south and east to the area around Uardere. Late in 1978, however, Siad decided to try to distance his government from insurgent operations in a new attempt to satisfy US conditions for military aid. By then he had strengthened his domestic position by espousing the Ogadeni cause and by pursuing pro-Western and pro-Saudi policies. In addition, the successful Ethiopian offensives in Eritrea in 1978 probably caused him to fear an Ethiopian redeployment to the Ogaden.

33. In Siad's view, US conditions for military aid were, and are, vague and confusing. He seemed to believe that he did not have to end all involvement in the Ogaden, but only give more authority to the WSLF leadership and decrease arms shipments to the WSLF, while continuing other aid. There was, in fact, a lull in the Ogaden fighting in early 1979 and the Somali Army apparently reduced its ties to the guerrillas.

34. But by mid-May 1979, the SNA reasserted its control of the WSLF. The shift appeared to be related to several developments—a more aggressive Ethiopian threat to WSLF base camps, tribal dissension within the WSLF, and the interest of some WSLF elements in declaring an independent Ogaden state. Moreover, Somalia's complex ethnic politics probably were a major element in Siad's decision to resume control of the insurgency. Siad's political power had become increasingly dependent upon his appeasement of the important Ogadeni subclan. Siad also feared that discontented elements of the WSLF might join the disaffected Majertaini clan (long at odds with Siad), which provided the base for the Somali Salvation Front (SSF), which is fighting alongside the Ethiopians in the Ogaden.

35. Despite its small numbers (fewer than a thousand) and its association with Ethiopia, the SSF is a problem for Siad. The Ethiopians had in the past tried to work with Somali political exiles. But the impetus for the SSF came from Somali military officers who staged an abortive coup against Siad in April 1978, fled the country, and eventually obtained Ethiopian backing. From Siad's perspective, the SSF is a threat not because it can overthrow his regime, but because it can exploit interclan friction within the WSLF and encourage separatism in the borderlands.

Reintroduction of Somali Regular Units

36. By May 1979, this range of concerns (and perhaps as well Mogadishu's perception that the Ethiopians were in trouble in Eritrea) appears to have led Siad to increase the SNA presence inside the Ogaden and this in turn led to a general increase in the level of military activity. Moreover, Somalia's ground force capability had been somewhat improved by materiel deliveries from Western Europe, Muslim countries, and China. It is not clear when SNA units were introduced into the Ogaden. They may have been there as early as July 1979, but this has not been confirmed.

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37. These units have operated primarily in the Uardere salient of the Ogaden. The original purpose of these operations is not altogether clear, although it seems likely that they were related to efforts to take advantage of Ethiopian weakness, to an attempt to prevent the SSF from operating from the Uardere area, and to fears that Ethiopian efforts to resupply and reinforce garrisons in the southern Ogaden presaged an attempt to dislodge the guerrillas from their bases in that area.

38. The presence of the SNA units in the Ogaden and the increased guerrilla activity seem to have prompted the bombings carried out by Ethiopian aircraft against Somali towns and guerrilla strongholds in the Ogaden over the past five months. In late November 1979 Ethiopia conducted the first air raids inside central and southern Somalia. Further attacks were conducted in mid-January 1980, late February, and middle and late March. With one exception, the recent attacks have been no more than about 70 kilometers inside Somalia, generally against SNA installations. WSLF facilities are located with the SNA at most of these targets.

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39. The focus of the current fighting in the Ogaden—during March and the early days of April—has been the Ethiopian convoy routes from the north. Somali efforts to interdict the movement of resupply

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and reinforcement convoys to the Uardere salient have probably reflected a Somali predisposition to believe that the aim of recent Ethiopian military movements has been to increase pressure on the insurgents or to attack Somalia itself. As a result, in early April the Somalis had six confirmed battalions inside the Ogaden (some 3,000 to 4,000 men).

IV. OUTLOOK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR US INTERESTS

40. The upsurge in fighting in the Ogaden over the past six months—involving the reentry of regular Somali Army units and the renewal of Ethiopian airstrikes after a year's hiatus—is related to Siad's calculations about the battlefield situation and the wider political environment:

— The dispatch of regular troops, supplementing longstanding Somali Army support for the insurgents, is intended to bolster WSLF military capabilities, to prevent the consolidation of Ethiopian control near the border, and to guard against a possible direct attack on Somalia.

— Also important is Siad's desire to discourage WSLF interest in an independent Ogaden state, prevent the WSLF from fragmenting along tribal lines, and counter SSF attempts to exploit tribal dissidence in the border lands.

— Further, the continuing rebellions in Eritrea and elsewhere reinforce Siad's long-held belief that Ethiopia is a disintegrating imperial state.

— In addition, he may calculate that the fighting focuses international attention on the dispute and reminds the United States and the USSR that the issue must eventually be resolved.

41. We doubt that Siad will reduce his commitment to the insurgency for the foreseeable future, if for no other reason than to stay in power. The backing that virtually all Somalis give the irredentist cause and the destabilizing potential posed to the Mogadishu regime by an armed force the size of the WSLF compel Siad to support the insurgency.

42. Siad's ultimate goal remains the annexation of the Ogaden. If he should come to believe that this was unattainable at present, for tactical reasons he might accept as an interim measure internationally guaranteed autonomy for the Ogaden. But Ethiopia would have to make the major concessions, and there is no evidence that Addis Ababa regards the Ogaden military situation as grave enough to warrant concessions. Further, the Ethiopian regime cannot let itself be popularly perceived as a less effective defender of Ethiopia's territorial integrity than the discredited imperial regime. Moreover, it is willing to grant only nominal automony to the Ogadenis, fearing the imitation effect of looser forms of association on other restless minorities. Finally, there is the elusive promise of oil discoveries in the Ogaden.

43. Therefore, the war in the Ogaden will go on. We have no basis at this point for judging whether the deployment of Somali regular units into the Ogaden will be sustained at present or higher levels. If the primary purpose of the deployments is to block the perceived threat of an Ethiopian attack, fighting may in time subside and the Somali regular units may withdraw. If Siad has some more extensive end in view, or if Ethiopian airstrikes lead to a new spiral of retaliation and counterretaliation, the deployment of SNA forces in the Ogaden could continue indefinitely.

44. Because of the finite resources of each side, the cyclical pattern of hostilities will not necessarily lead to an upward spiral of increasing violence that would end in large-scale warfare between the two countries. Nevertheless, the reintroduction of regular Somali troops is a qualitative change in the situation, and we therefore cannot exclude the possibility of major battles between regular forces arising out of miscalculation, misperception of the other side's capabilities or intentions, or an attempt to take advantage of a local situation.

45. Both countries face severe economic problems. Ethiopia has a greater domestic resource base, but must allocate these resources among more military fronts. In the Ogaden it must maintain garrisons and supply routes and can only incrementally attempt to pacify a hostile countryside, while using airstrikes to punish Somalia. Somalia is sustaining insurgent forces at considerable cost and must support close to a million refugees, although this burden is partially alleviated by international assistance.

46. Certain developments, however, could lead either or both parties to make a larger input of resources in the conflict. First, Ethiopia recently agreed to allow Soviet geological exploration in the Ogaden, and discovery of commercially exploitable petroleum reserves or other minerals would change perceptions on both sides about the region's value. Second, a settlement of the Eritrea problem would free Ethiopian resources

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for the pacification of the Ogaden. A third development would be the provision of US arms aid to Somalia. The first two possibilities would probably result in significantly increased pressure on the insurgents by Ethiopian forces. Under these circumstances Siad certainly would not withdraw support from the WSLF under such pressure, but he might not choose at that time to match Ethiopian escalation of the fighting.

47. While both Ethiopia and Somalia will plumb the extent of military support they can extract from the superpowers, the Somalis would initially perceive (and eventually derive) an advantage in a new relationship with the United States. Somalia's capabilities would be markedly improved by arms and training assistance.

48. We doubt that arms aid would give the United States much leverage over Siad on the Ogaden issue. He intervenes primarily because of domestic imperatives and perceptions of the Ethiopian-Somali military balance that had little to do with Soviet policy in 1977 and will have little to do with US policy in the 1980s.

49. In July 1977, despite a Soviet presence in Somalia of 2,500 advisers (1,500 of them military), $280 million worth of Soviet arms, nearly total Somali dependence on spares, and partial dependence on Soviet petroleum supplies, Siad defied Moscow and invaded the Ogaden.

50. The Soviets remonstrated with him several times in the late spring of 1977. in view of the large stake the Soviets had acquired in Ethiopia by then, and Moscow's resultant interest in averting a war between its two clients.

51. Introduction of US aid might not immediately affect the pattern of hostilities in the Ogaden, but it would be a psychological boost for Siad, confirming to him the rightness of his Ogaden policy, and perhaps encouraging him to step up support for the insurgents. We believe that he is prepared to launch another conventional war in the unlikely event that the balance of forces were to shift substantially in his favor. On the other hand, we would not rule out that at a future juncture Siad himself might decide to wind down the insurgency temporarily, but, again, it would be for reasons of expediency.

52. If too many conditions were attached to US arms aid (particularly relating to restrictions on the Ogaden) or the arms package is too small, Siad might opt for the support already offered by Iraq and other Arab states. He is more likely, however, to try to use Arab aid as a bargaining chip for as long as he can, since he would prefer a significant military relationship with the United States to exclusive reliance on the Arabs.

53. If the fighting stays at approximately the present level, we believe that the Soviets and Cubans will probably confine themselves to behind-the-lines support within Ethiopia. If the situation should deteriorate dramatically for the Ethiopians, or if the fighting should intensify, Havana might expand the size of its forces and approve an expanded combat role for them within the Ogaden.

54. We believe that Moscow will continue to discourage an Ethiopian ground invasion of Somalia. But if the fighting should escalate into a major confrontation between conventional forces, Moscow probably would support Ethiopia with more arms and advisers as it did for the Aden regime in 1979.

55. Ethiopian support to anti-Siad elements in the Ogaden and in Somalia proper, particularly the SSF, provides Addis Ababa with an additional weapon. While there are distinct limits to the following an Ethiopian-backed group can attract in Somalia, Ethiopian assistance to Ogadeni and Somali subversives could be augmented relatively cheaply, aggravating Siad's problems. Greater Ethiopian encouragement of anti-Siad forces could be expected to produce more sabotage and terrorism.

56. If US aid to Somalia were to result in a significantly increased tempo of fighting in the Ogaden, a stepped-up Ethiopian campaign of sabotage and terrorism against the Siad regime could also cause collateral harm to any US installations and personnel, Apart from this possibility, we do not at present foresee any internal security threats to US personnel or facilities during the two to three years covered by this memorandum.

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58. Any marked increase in fighting in the Ogaden could require Ethiopia to increase its entreaties to Moscow for aid. In return for greater Soviet military and political support, Addis Ababa would probably grant Moscow increased military access to Ethiopian facilities, such as expansion of facilities at Dahlak Island or even establishment of a previously planned naval base north of Assab. But this greater access would have only a marginal impact on the Soviet Navy's capability to operate in the region as long as it continues to have access to South Yemeni facilities.

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Chronology of Major Events in the Ogaden, 1975-80

	Military Activity	Somali-Ogadeni Relations	Political Events
1975		Founding of WSLF under Siad's auspices	Chaos and purges in Ethiopia
1976	Increasing guerrilla activity in Ogaden. Abortive "people's March" in Eritrea.		Continued political chaos and purges in Ethiopia
December			First Soviet-Ethiopian arms deal
1977			
February-April	First Soviet-sponsored arms deliveries; PDRY (South Yemen) equipment transferred in ships.	SNA general staff establishes separate command to maintain liaison with WSLF insurgents.	
April	US advisers withdrawn from Ethiopia.		
May	First direct Soviet arms deliveries to Ethiopia.		Mengistu in Moscow, signs second arms deal.
June	WSLF destroys railroad bridges in northern Ogaden.		
July	WSLF-mounted offensive repelled, regular Somali units invade Ogaden.	SNA liaison unit disappears as separate entity. Guerrillas are brought under direct Somali Army command.	Siad visits Saudi Arabia in early July.
August	Somalia occupies most of the Ogaden.		Siad visits Moscow 29-31 August.
September	Jijiga falls on the 13th.		
November	Soviet airlift to Ethiopia begins on the 28th.		Siad abrogates Somali-Soviet Friendship Treaty on the 13th. Two days later Soviet military delegation arrives in Addis Ababa.
December 1977-January 1978	Arrival of Cuban combat units, counteroffensive begins.		
1978			
February	Counteroffensive continues.		
March	Somali regulars withdrawn from Ogaden.	[redacted]	25X1
April		Somali regulars "volunteer" into WSLF. WSLF units directly subordinate to SNA.	Abortive coup in Somalia; plotters flee and eventually become part of Ethiopian-backed SSF.
May	Revival of guerrilla activity in the Ogaden.		Mengistu warns against further Somali activity in the Ogaden.
June	Addis Ababa–Djibouti rail line reopens, but, on the 18th, WSLF guerrillas destroy a bridge, closing it again for two to three weeks.	WSLF adopts structure of a conventional army (divisions, brigades, battalions, etc.). Use of specific Somali words suggests close parallel to contemporary SNA restructuring effort inside Somalia.	

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Chronology of Major Events in the Ogaden, 1975-80 (Continued)

	Military Activity	Somali-Ogadeni Relations	Political Events
1978 (Continued)			
From August on	Heavy fighting in Ogaden.		Tribal splits, anti-Siad sentiment in WSLF.
November-December		WSLF guerrillas come under direct SNA administration.	
December 1978-January 1979	Ethiopian air raids in northern Somalia.	[redacted]	25X1
1979			
February		Siad reduces aid to guerrillas, apparently to gain military assistance from the United States.	SSF founded in Addis Ababa.
March	WSLF activity drops off as Siad reduces support. Ethiopians conduct sweeps in the southern Ogaden.	Guerrilla command structure shifted from Somali Ministry of Defense to the WSLF.	Civilian and military discontent in Somalia over reduction of support for guerrillas.
March		Regular Somali soldiers operating with guerrillas given choice of returning to Somalia or resigning.	
April-May	Heavier military activity in the Ogaden.		
May		Somali Government restores previous levels of logistic support.	
July	Somalia sends *Darawishta* (paramilitary police) into Ogaden to help guerrillas.		
September	Continued Ethiopian sweeps have little effect.		Kosygin in Addis Ababa. Apparent disagreements with Mengistu over the level of Soviet aid.
October		WSLF guerrilla commands adopt exact designators of their counterpart SNA commands. WSLF thereby effectively becomes auxiliary army to SNA.	
November	Ethiopian air raids on WSLF supply bases in the Ogaden. First strikes into Somalia in late November.	Regular Somali units in the Ogaden. May have been there as early as July.	
December 1979-March 1980	Air raids continue; they last for two to three days and come at intervals of up to two to three weeks because of Ethiopian resupply problems. Heavy but intermittent ground combat continues in the Ogaden.	SNA appears to implement broad and well-coordinated program of intervention in Ogaden.	

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Chronology of Major Events in the Ogaden, 1975-80 (Continued)

	Military Activity	Somali-Ogadeni Relations	Political Events
1980			
January			
March	WSLF and Somalia regulars attempt to stop Ethiopian supply convoys.		

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