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April 21, 2005

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION  
October 28, 1969

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *H*

SUBJECT: Somali Coup and Former Prime Minister Egal

In response to your concern over the welfare of Prime Minister Egal, I asked Elliot Richardson to send out an urgent instruction, and our Embassy in Somalia answered this morning. (Tab A)

Egal is under closely-guarded house arrest. He apparently escaped harm during the coup and has been treated decently so far, including retention of his household servants. Our embassy has not probed further than this -- and expression of our concern was kept low key to avoid any reaction by the coup leadership that could jeopardize Egal. The new regime is bound to be suspicious of an attempted restoration in these early days (especially by what they see as a US/Ethiopian alliance), and I think we have made our point about Egal's treatment with a discreet inquiry.

We still know very little about the new government or its intentions. No strong man has emerged and the power seems to lie with a group of young colonels trained in the USSR and Italy. The Italians (whose intelligence is solid from their colonial tie to Somalia) report that these officers are mainly moderates who will try to clear away domestic corruption without changing the detente with Ethiopia or opening the door to the Soviets.

As of this morning, public statements from the new regime have not gone beyond what I reported to you earlier -- an emphasis on restoring political integrity, but no specifics on foreign or domestic policies.

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*Maybe (hopefully)  
they are like the  
Greek Colonels -*

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