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March 15, 1971

Response to National Security Study Memorandum 115:

Horn of Africa

I. PURPOSE

This study is intended to pose alternatives for U.S. policy towards the Horn of Africa--Ethiopia, Somalia and French Territory of the Afars and Issas (TFAI)--in the light of: (1) the current situation; (2) the potential difficulties which may well arise in the area over the next five years; (3) the demonstrated Soviet interest in the area; and (4) our desire to retain our Kagnev communications facility located in Asmara, Eritrea, for at least the next five years. By identifying the nature of US interests in the Horn and the policy choices available to the United States in various contingencies, this paper will offer a basis for choosing among policy alternatives. In particular, it will examine the key issue of the degree to which the US should become involved in Ethiopia's counterinsurgency operations in order to protect our interests.

II. U.S. INTERESTS

A. General. US interests in Ethiopia are considerably more important than our interests in Somalia or than those in Sudan. Ethiopia has been a major focal point of U.S. activity in Africa having received \$250 million in US economic assistance since 1948 and \$150 million in military aid since 1953. Two

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types of US interests in Ethiopia may be distinguished: (1) our direct and tangible interest in maintaining a US communications facility at Kagnew and (2) our broader interests stemming from Ethiopia's size, location and population; its traditional friendship with the United States; and the moderating influence it has exercised in African affairs and the third world under the leadership of Emperor Haile Selassie. U.S. interests in Somalia are largely derivative of our interests in Ethiopia. They center on preserving regional stability but include a possible interest in future access to Somali ports and air facilities.

B. Kagnew Station. The importance of Kagnew Station to the US has been a major determinant of our scale of involvement in Ethiopia and has shaped our regional policies. Established in 1942 as a small communications station when we obtained the site from the British, Kagnew has grown (primarily because of its ideal location for [REDACTED] and communications-[REDACTED]) to where it now is made up of over 1900 US employees (1700 of which are military), 1600 dependents and over 1700 local personnel. Kagnew Station was developed pursuant to the US-Imperial Ethiopian Government (IEG) Base Rights Agreements of 1953 which runs until 1978 and is then subject to one year's termination notice by either party. While the US pays nominal land rent, the quid pro quo for use of the facility is our military assistance program which, over the last five years, has averaged \$12-13 million annually.

Kagnew functions include [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] separate US Army and Navy
communications links [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] If it
becomes necessary to withdraw from Kagnew, however, it is not
proposed that the [REDACTED] facility be relocated; rather
efforts would be made to obtain [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] By that time,
according to the study, it should be possible to tell what, if
anything, is needed in later years. If it appears that the
US will have a continuing need for Kagnew Station beyond 1978, the
study forecasts that it would be for a fairly small, well-
equipped communications station [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] from the present complex.

A satellite concept has been approved by the Secretary of
Defense and, if funded, a US military tactical satellite system
satisfying most Navy communications needs could be operational
in the mid to late 1970's. Because funding constraints and ship
overhaul schedules would not permit installation of satellite
communications transceiver terminals in all Navy ships at one
time, certain high frequency (HF) stations would still be

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required beyond this time frame to cover the transitional period until all ships and ground stations could be configured. A current study concludes, therefore, that some of the HF functions being performed at Kagnew may be required even after a military tactical satellite system covering the Western Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Persian Gulf is operational.

A separate but related communications system located at Kagnew is the Defense Communications System (DCS) which primarily provides point-to-point communications. Plans for deployment of a DCS tactical and strategic satellite system to replace these functions have neither been approved nor funded, and a satellite system would not be deployable within the time frame of this paper. Because of the isolation of Kagnew Station from Middle Eastern and European communication nodal points, the employment of non-satellite communication technologies, e.g., microwave, troposcatter, in place of the present HF systems is not feasible.

In addition to its cost in US military aid, Kagnew has imposed some political costs on both Ethiopia and the United States. It is the larger of two remaining US operated military facilities in Africa and as such draws some criticism from African states opposed to foreign military presence in Africa. In Ethiopia, students and other elements of the young educated urban class have criticized our facility in Asmara. Most of the Ethiopian elite, however, tend to regard it favorably as

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inseparable from the important US aid programs. In the light of our requirements for Kagnev, the current political costs to the US seem acceptable.

If, however, we were to become openly identified by increasing our aid and involvement in IEG actions against the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and, in retaliation, the ELF for the first time were to attack Kagnev and/or American personnel, these political costs would increase substantially. Political costs would also rise if the Station should become an issue among contenders for power in a succession crisis (see V A-C and VI A below).

C. Ethiopia's Role as a Friendly, Moderate State. Over the past decade, Ethiopia's moderating influence has served US

interests by helping resolve regional conflicts in Africa, minimizing great power rivalry on the continent, and strengthening the independence of African states. For example, Ethiopia acted in support of US objectives in both the Congolese and Nigerian crises. A friendly Ethiopia has benefitted the US at the UN and in other international forums. Its stabilizing role on the international scene, for example, its contribution of troops to the UN effort in Korea and the Congo, has been in marked contrast to the attitude and policies of the more radical African states. To a large degree, this situation has been the result of our close personal relationship with the Emperor and his prestige and influence among other African countries.

During the next few years, instability within Ethiopia, the death of the Emperor, or the increasing assertiveness of other African states may diminish Ethiopia's weight in African affairs. However, its status as tropical Africa's second most populous state, its long history of independence, its political coherence and stability as a nation, and its being the location of OAU and ECA headquarters are all factors which should help maintain continued, if reduced, Ethiopian importance in African councils. Ethiopia's agricultural potential should permit continued economic development, albeit from a low base. Its military establishment, though of poor quality by Western standards and dependent on US assistance, will remain an imposing force in Africa.

D. Promotion of Stability and Political Moderation in Somalia. A military government composed largely of younger military and police officers including a number trained in the Soviet Union, took charge of Somalia in October 1969. The regime is increasing its ties with radical Arab regimes and with the Soviet Union, whose influence in Somalia is growing. By virtue of its location and the presence of large numbers of Somalis in adjoining territories, Somalia has the potential for causing serious trouble for Ethiopia, Kenya and the TFAI. This has been demonstrated in the past, and Somalia has never renounced its irrendentist claims to the Somali-populated portions of those three territories, although they have been substantially moderated in recent years.

In former years, the U.S. and other Western powers were able to exercise some restraining influence on Somali aspirations and to encourage the establishment of a detente with Ethiopia and Kenya. The continuation of this detente and over-all stability in the Horn is clearly in US interests. To this end, the U.S. welcomes the continuation of as much Western influence as possible in Somalia, lest the field be entirely abandoned to those whose advice would run counter to broader US interests in the Horn.

E. Strategic Importance of the Horn. Relative to global US strategic interests, the Horn is of marginal

strategic importance. US military movements and communications in general proceed directly from the US eastward and westward across the Atlantic and Pacific. We are interested in retaining access to port facilities at Massawa, Assab, and Djibouti (TFAI) and landing rights at Ethiopia airports. We also continue to have some interest in obtaining access to Somalia's ports--Berbera and Chisimaio--and airfields which are now denied to us. At the same time we retain a modest naval force in the area and wish to maximize the number of ports accessible to it, particularly in countries such as Ethiopia located adjacent to the narrow straits connecting the Red Sea with the Indian Ocean. The reopening of the Suez Canal would enhance the strategic importance of the Horn and its seaports on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Our interests in the Indian Ocean are generally of a moderate level as is the threat posed to them by the Soviet Union at the present time. Short of general war, the Soviet Union or any of the littoral states would be unlikely to attempt to deny US vessels access to the Indian Ocean itself or to the Red Sea Basin. In general the principal problems facing us in the Indian Ocean arise from the political instability and the low level of economic development in many parts of the area. Our posture in Ethiopia can do little to contribute to an amelioration of this situation.

In some contingencies the availability of military landing rights in Ethiopia would be of value, particularly if access to states in the western Indian Ocean area through Turkey and

Iran were denied to us. The most likely contingencies might involve the necessity for evacuating American citizens should a crisis erupt in Iran or Saudi Arabia. Our ability to utilize Ethiopian facilities in politically sensitive situations in which we might wish to intervene actively east of Ethiopia would, however, be limited by difficulty in obtaining landing or overflight rights in Uganda, Congo (K), Kenya and Sudan or in effecting a long and costly detour around South Africa.

Ethiopia has been referred to as a buffer between the Soviet-influenced, radical Arab states to the north and the more moderate states of East and Central Africa. Kenya, for example, is concerned over the need to maintain a stable and moderate regime in Addis, as is the new government in Uganda. The Kenyans regard their economic cooperation and mutual defense arrangements with Ethiopia as mutually reinforcing for the two countries and a bulwark against Somali irredentist claims in the area. The effect of Ethiopia's allowing Israeli aid to southern Sudanese insurgents through its territory is to impede the spread of radical Arab influence southward by inhibiting the full integration of that region into Sudan. But the ability of African states in this area to exert military pressure against each other across their frontiers is limited; the heartlands of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan are separated by broad areas of sparsely-inhabited territory.

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Radical Arab or Soviet influence would be more likely to manifest itself in Nairobi or Kampala as a result of internal political developments in those countries than via Ethiopia, Somalia or Sudan.

F. Economic and Political Development. The US is committed to seeking a world of free, independent and viable states. The President and Secretary Rogers have publicly affirmed that it is in the US interest to cooperate with African states in their efforts to achieve economic and political development. They have pledged the US within the limits of its resources to be responsive to African needs. Ethiopia's friendly character, its long historical relationship with the United States, its agricultural potential and generally satisfactory economic growth rate, its large population, and its lack of a former colonial patron identify it as being eligible as an important recipient of US economic aid.

G. Maintenance of International Peace and Security. In accordance with the UN Charter, the US has several broad policy commitments which are relevant to the Horn. We seek to promote international peace and stability. We wish states to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other states. We are also concerned that the wishes of peoples to achieve self-determination not be disregarded. Issues of territorial

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integrity and self-determination are very much alive in the Horn including mutually conflicting Somali and Ethiopian territorial claims, ELF demands for independence from Ethiopia, and the desire of Somali peoples outside Somalia for self-determination. To the extent that we are drawn into these regional issues, it will be in our interests to pursue regional policies which are as consistent as possible with our broader policy commitments.

H. Limiting Soviet Influence. In the Horn the extent of our concern about Soviet influence in Somalia and Sudan is in great measure a function of our interests in Ethiopia. Moscow's influence in Sudan and Somalia could result in improved Soviet access to the Indian Ocean; this would be especially true if the Suez Canal were opened. At present, access to Somali port facilitates Soviet operations in the Indian Ocean. Soviet identification with Khartoum serves to advance the Soviet position in the Arab world. Nevertheless, there is little that the US can do to deny these advantages to the Soviets--in Khartoum, as long as we remain identified in the Arab mind, with Israel, and in Mogadiscio as long as we maintain our support for the Ethiopian Government.

I. Trade and Investment. US trade and investment in the Horn are extremely small. Our investment in Ethiopia is only \$35 million and is insignificant in Somalia. The US purchases about 60% of Ethiopia's coffee production, but

bilateral trade with that country is insignificant as a percentage of total US foreign trade. As yet, neither Ethiopia nor Somalia has any known minerals or other resources of importance to the United States.

[Omitted here is the remainder of the study]