SUBJECT: Kagnaw Station Withdrawal

REF: (A) STATE 181336; (B) STATE 182901

1. In audience with the Emperor September 17, I conveyed contents of paras 2 through 5 of ref tel (A) and para 2 of ref tel (B). Both Foreign Minister and Minister of

Palace took full notes. H.M. Ambassador Ponkin's translation several times to make sure he had thoroughly
2. In response to my statement, HIM expressed his appreciation for this information. Just as the USG had carefully considered rationale for withdrawing from Kagnew, so he and his government would now need to consider very carefully what the implications of this withdrawal would be for his government and its relations with the USG, for there would surely be some. The technological and financial reasons I had cited for the decision were ones which he well understood and the decision was one which only the USG could make. Now his government would wish to study carefully the consequences of that decision. It was his hope that there would be no adverse effects on the relations of deep friendship which had existed for so long between the two governments. He wished President Nixon to be informed that he and his government would certainly do their best in this respect. As for the future disposition of the facilities at Kagnew, his government would of course be prepared to discuss this subject with appropriate USG representatives.

3. I replied that I appreciated His Majesty's sentiments, particularly his hope for a continuation of very friendly...
relations and that they would be conveyed to the President.

I also said I was fully confident from the US standpoint that the longstanding friendship would be continued in the future.

4. In conclusion His Majesty expressed the wish that our governments stay in close touch with each other in the future regarding developments at Kagnew.

5. Comment: The Emperor obviously regarded the decision on Kagnew as one which has serious implications for Ethiopia-U.S.-Ethiopian relations. Moreover, in his three references to the absence of adverse effects of this decision on future US-Ethiopian relations, he invariably used the word "hope" rather than "confidence". It seemed clear to me that, as was to be expected, His Majesty has serious doubts whether US support for Ethiopia will be as wholehearted in the future as it has been in the past.

6. I hope the Department will now provide the proposed press guidance on this subject soonest so that we can clear it with the Foreign Ministry. Public release of this information will be of great assistance in forestalling inaccurate rumors, expediting the initiation of the complicated
withdrawal process. We cannot be certain that IRO will
hold information on Kaynew decision closely both here
and in Asmara, and it will be awkward trying to respond
to queries on the subject prior to availability of press
release agreed with IRO. Embassy plans decline comment
if queried before then.

Parker D. Wyman, Charge

1981.