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In Attendance (Wed., 10/16/74)

Secretary of State Kissinger (presiding as Chairman)

- D Mr. Ingersoll
- P Mr. Sisco
- T Mr. Maw
- M Mr. Brown
- C Mr. Sonnenfeldt
- AF Mr. Easum
- ARA Mr. Rogers
- EA Mr. Habib
- EUR Mr. Hartman
- NEA Mr. Atherton
- INR Mr. Hyland
- S/P Mr. Lord
- S/PRS Mr. Anderson
- S/AM Mr. McCloskey
- PM Mr. Vest
- IO Mr. Buffum
- H Mr. Goldberg
- L Mr. Hopkins
- S Mr. Eagleburger
- S/S Mr. Springsteen
- EB Mr. Katz

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[Omitted here are portions of the discussion unrelated to the Horn of Africa.]

MR. INGERSOLL: You made request for a study on Ethiopia, similar to Portugal, but not sending a team there.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I was sort of embarrassed to send -- Sadat asked me what I thought of developments in Ethiopia, and I said I hadn't the foggiest idea; and he didn't believe me. He thought I was hiding out, hiding from him. (Laughter.) He's going to try and find out. But it's another one of these situations that we seem to specialize in. We see something happening and then we watch it until it's unambiguously bad.

I haven't got a clue. Is there some way we can find out? Would it do any good to send somebody there?

MR. EASUM: No; I don't think so. The problem is not the activity that we're involved in; the problem is how to respond at all to this request of Americans. You approved 44 million dollars, roughly, for grant and credit. You also approved 53 million dollars in sales. They are coming to us for cash. They are coming to us and saying, "We don't have the money. You've got to give us

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that 53 million."

Now, there's no way we can devise that we can do it, even if we wanted to do it, because of the sales. We can not be responsive to their prime request. We have a message in right now saying the Chief of the Defense Forces -- General Aman -- who's also Minister of Defense -- has told our people that he has a note from the Russians that we now have enough to confirm that the Russians are prepared to sell them or give them what they need.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No question.

MR. EASUM: Maybe we should go ahead and let them do it.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: If that happens, it will be taken by many of the Arabs as a sign of another American abdication. That's why Sadat asked me. Countries that have to place their bets in that situation in the Middle East want to see whether American power is shrinking or holding steady.

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MR. EASUM: Somalia says the Arabs are not going to attack them.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: If the United States -- if a country gets an arms supply from the Soviets, they

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will conclude the United States is contracting its power in that area, whether Somalia attacks or declares itself a neutral zone. That's a totally irrelevant question.

MR. EASUM: Well, we have to figure out how to get around yet -- to learn how to get around those physical limitations.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I'm not saying that we can. The impact of Sadat's question is he couldn't care whether they take all of Ethiopia, for that matter. That's something he can understand. He isn't interested in the integrity of Ethiopia. He wanted to see whether the United States was pulling out -- whether while he was putting his bets on the United States, we weren't giving arms to our friends. It's as simple as that in their mind, do you think?

MR. HYLAND: I think so. And the situation there is that the people there, who are in power now -- Aman and his people -- are clearly more friendly.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't know enough about it, nor do I know that we can do anything.

MR. EASUM: There's very little we can do.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, at the worst, we can go to Congress.

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MR. HYLAND: If we let Russian arms go to Ethiopia, there's no rationale for that.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It isn't so much a question of the Arabs. This was not the major topics of my conversation with Sadat. It was a ten-minute aspect of it. But is there any way that we can find out what's going on?

MR. EASUM: Well, I think this paper will show you the best judgment we have as to what's going on.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well then, can we get a paper? If the judgment is we should give arms and there are Congressional ceilings, let Congress take the responsibility. Let's go to Congress when it convenes, if that's our judgment.

MR. EASUM: It's H's judgment that that ceiling cannot be waived, and they're not about to make a fight for the waiver authority.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Who is "they"? H does goddam well what I tell them to do! Who is H? Is that the congressional thing? (Laughter.) Don't tell me that H isn't going to ask for a waiver, if the policy decision is that we're going to ask for a waiver.

MR. EASUM: I haven't said that. The Defense

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Department and our people who have leads to Congress don't believe they will succeed in getting this waiver authority back which they had before, which is not in the legislation.

MR. HYLAND: We'll try to do everything we can. That's what the man needs now.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: If our judgment is -- I have no judgment yet -- if our judgment is that the future of the policy in Ethiopia depends on our answer to arms, if the introduction of Soviet arms into Ethiopia has serious foreign policy consequences, then we damn well will go to Congress and let the Congress take the responsibility for what follows after. But I don't think it's H's judgment as to what Congress will do. If Congress will vote against it, then let them vote against it.

MR. HABIB: Well, they can vote against it for the entire waiver; but if you went to one country, could you get a specific waiver?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Then we will try to get it.

MR. GOLDBERG: I don't think it's judgment at all, that you can't do it. It's a question of presenting a particular situation to Congress.

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