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THE CONTESTED LEGITIMACY OF ERITREAN STATEHOOD: THE EFFECTS OF ARAB INTERVENTION, (1941-1993)

By

HABTOM ZERAI GHIRMAI

Department of International Relations

A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in International Relations to the Faculty of Humanities, The University of Witwatersrand

November 2003

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Declaration

I, Habtom Zerai Ghirami, declare that the content of this research report is my own work unless otherwise acknowledge or referenced. It has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other learning institution. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Candidate: Habtom Zerai Ghirmai

Date: _____

Supervisor: **Rod Alence (Ph.D)**

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

It has been customary for literary works and a must for research reports to spare, at least half a page, to acknowledge the individuals, no matter in what way it comes, who have extended a supportive hand for its completion. Obviously, this work is no exception. Therefore;

First and foremost, my unreserved gratitude goes to Dr. Rod Alence, who most ably supervised this work till completion. Moreover, for his inspirational approach and invaluable contributions that exceeded the usual scope of a literary supervisor.

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Habtom Zerai Ghirmai

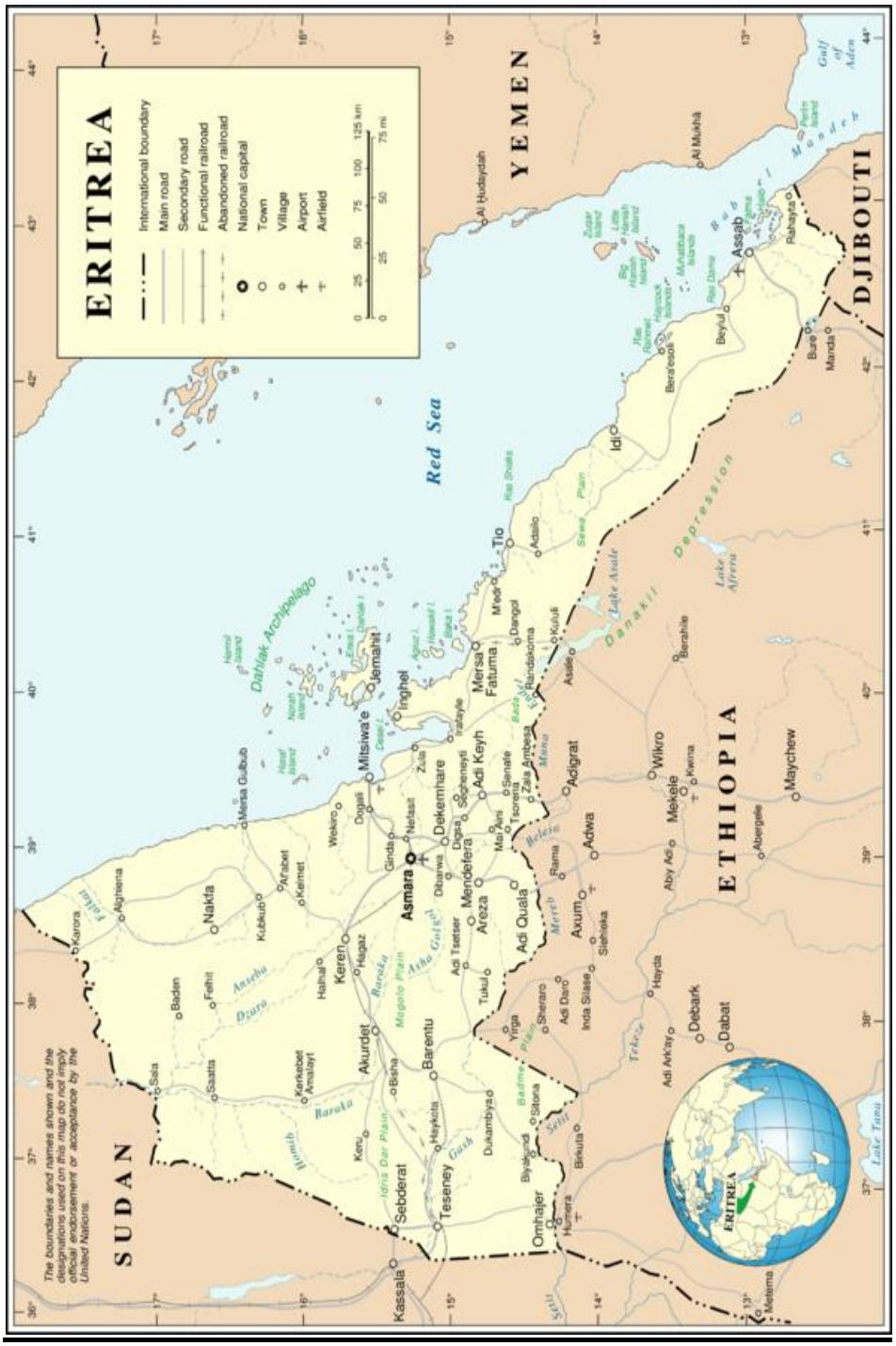
November 7, 2003

Abstract

This report has embarked on to contribute to the understanding of the diplomatic history of Eritrea's war of independence. Its primary purpose is to assess critically the genesis and effects of Arab interventionist policies in Eritrea. The underlying arguments are: Arab intervention was base on a flawed perception of Eritrea, as an Arab nation, which could rather be explained in light of their 'national interests' across the spectrum of ideological, political and security concerns. Second, that intervention was not critical to the victory of this largely self-reliant struggle. This work has also probed into the core of the matter in an endeavor to piece together a rough balance-sheet of thee interventions to show that they were even detrimental to the struggle. Though it has put much emphasis on the diplomatic circumstance that surround the struggle, as the formative years of the struggle had contributed to that end, as a way of introduction this academic inquiry has started two decades before the start of the armed struggle, stretching the time frame from 1941 to 1993. The year 1941 marks the ending of Italian colonial rule and the start of the British Military Administration, and 1993 signifies the re-birth of the country as a legitimate sovereign by its admission to the United Nations.

Habtom Zerai Ghirmai

November 7, 2003


ERITREA
International boundary
Main road
Secondary road
Functional railroad
Abandoned railroad
National capital
Town
Village
Airport
Airfield
SUDAN
YEMEN
DJIBOUTI
ETHIOPIA
Red Sea
Gulf of Aden
Asmara
Keren
Massawa
Assab
Adigrat
Axum
Adwa
Mekele
Maychew
Debark
Dabat
Barentu
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Inghel
Jemahi
Mersa Fatuma
Tio
Idi
Beyda
Bure
Manda
Rahayta
Al Mukhā
Al Hudaydah
Dahlak Archipelago
Danakil Depression
Lake Asale
Lake Afrera
Lake Tana
Gash
Setit
Barka
Anseba
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Belesa
Tekeze
Dekemhare
Adi Keyh
Adi Quala
Areza
Mendefera
Nakfa
Karora
Ginda
Wikro
Berahile
Aby Adi
Adi Arkay
Adi Daro
Inda Silase
Sheraro
Humera
Berahile
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Ras Dumeira
Ras Shoka
Ras Fatma
Ras Kasar
Ras Rahmet
Big Hanish Island
Little Hanish Island
Zubair Island
Haycock Islands
Mantarara Islands
Perim Island
Dahlak Kebir I.
Dahlak Chico I.
Harmil Island
Norah Island
Hasir Island
Dessi I.
Gulf of Zula
Bay of Zula
Plain
Mountains
Depression
Lake
Gulf
Bay
Island
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Strait
Mareb
Belesa
Gash
Setit
Barka
Anseba
Tekeze
Dankalia
Afar
Tigray
Amhara
Oromia
Somali
Gambela
Benishangul-Gumuz
Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
Dire Dawa
Harari
Addis Ababa
Afar
Somali
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Gambela
Benishangul-Gumuz
Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
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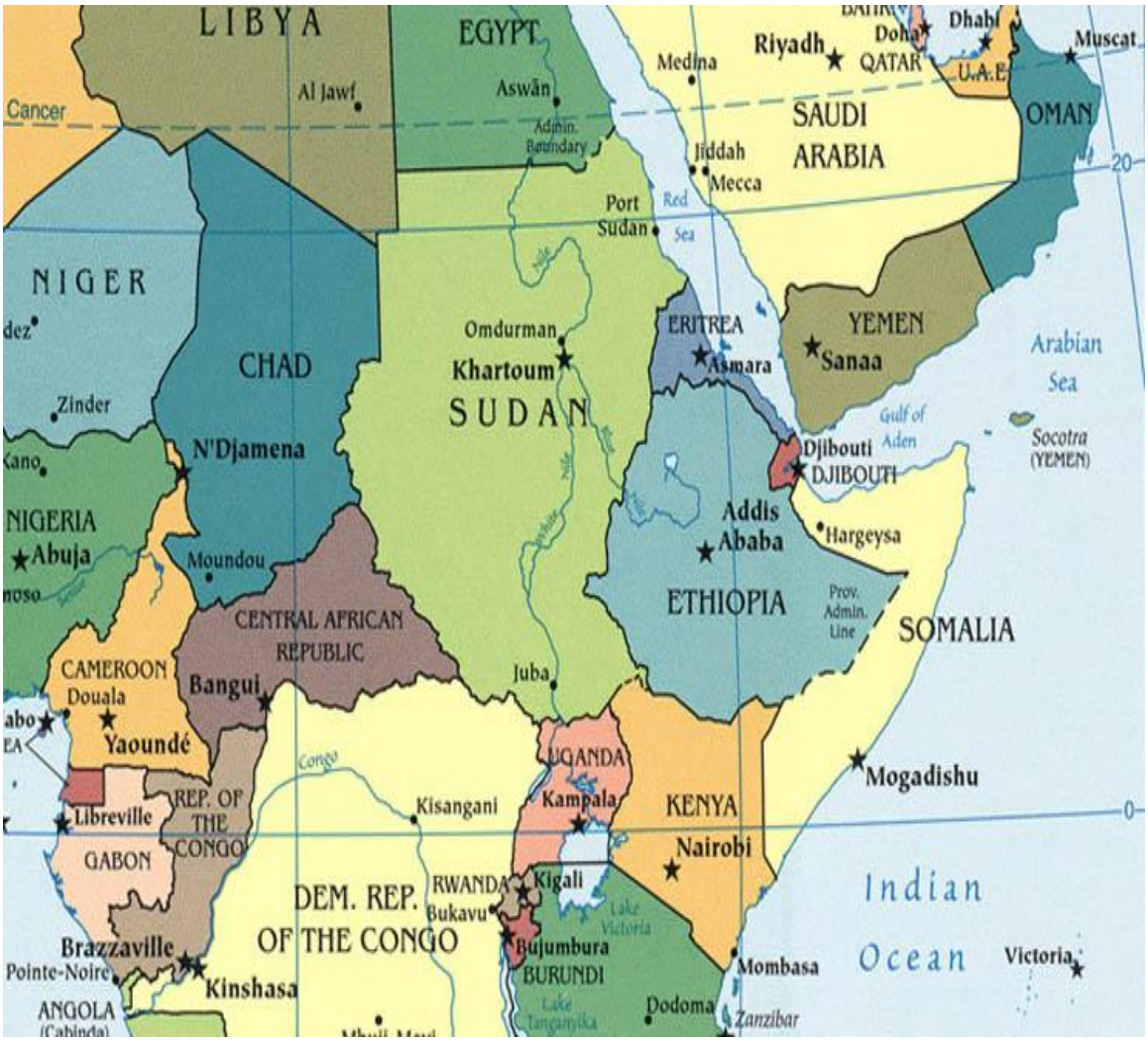
Harari
Addis Ababa
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.


LIBYA
EGYPT
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Medina
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Doha
QATAR
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U.A.E.
Muscat
OMAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Jiddah
Mecca
Port Sudan
Red Sea
NIGER
dez
Zinder
CHAD
N'Djamena
Omdurman
Khartoum
SUDAN
ERITREA
Asmara
YEMEN
Sanaa
Arabian Sea
Gulf of Aden
Socotra (YEMEN)
Djibouti
DJIBOUTI
Addis Ababa
Hargeysa
ETHIOPIA
Prov. Admin. Line
SOMALIA
Kano
NIGERIA
Abuja
Moundou
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Bangui
Juba
CAMEROON
Douala
Yaoundé
Congo
UGANDA
Kampala
KENYA
Mogadishu
Libreville
REP. OF THE CONGO
Kisangani
Nairobi
GABON
RWANDA
Kigali
Bukavu
DEM. REP. OF THE CONGO
Lake Victoria
Indian Ocean
Brazzaville
Pointe-Noire
Kinshasa
Bujumbura
BURUNDI
Mombasa
Victoria
ANGOLA
Lake Tanganyika
Dodoma
Zanzibar
20
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Horn of Africa that has been a reserve of socio-political strives, drought, and famine; perhaps more than anywhere else on the continent, has "repeatedly drawn the world's attention since antiquity."[1] Consequently, extensive media coverage featured it prominently in the news headlines and academic literature, across the spectrum of social sciences, explored it and drew at different conclusions and prescribed as many solutions. The region remains economically vulnerable and politically unstable, despite the high placed hope that the ending of the Cold War, would usher an era of economic recovery and reconstruction by offering an immense opportunity for peace to prevail. These hopes, however, were shattered by the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 and the subsequent internecine wars. The north-south civil war in the Sudan has evaded political solution for two decades and is continuing unabated. The terrible 'border war' between Eritrea and Ethiopia has been the latest and costly addition to the list. This, conflict, which had been neither unexpected nor unavoidable was rather the latest and the most dramatic evidence of Ethiopia's continuing ambitions for access to the Red Sea.

[1] Dale Bricker and Leah Leatherbee, Balancing Consensus and Dissent: The Prospects for Human Rights and Democracy in the Horn of Africa , The Fund for Peace, at www.sas.upenn.edu/Africa_studies/Hornet/Bricket.

The region, for the most part, had outlived its strategic significance long before the end of the Cold War, and thereafter, remained largely marginalized from the list of priorities of major global actors. It was once strategically so important, however, that commanded the manifestations of Super-power rivalries and the intricacies of regional politics, which had pushed the region into the thrust of the Cold War and the scourge of Arab-Israeli conflicts. To carry out a discussion of the root causes of the ongoing conflicts is a rigorous task far beyond the scope of this report and quite possibly beyond the scope of the discipline itself as it mainly involves historically deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural reasons. Nevertheless, the overwhelming reasons why there has been such exceptional strife before, *inter alia* were two: first, Ethiopian and Eritrean uncompromising and mutually exclusive, needs for territorial expansion and the quest for self-determination, respectively; second, the zero-sum-game between the nation-building processes of the 'multinational' Ethiopian state and the 'multi-state' Somali nation. Though this report is mainly focuses with the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, it has also accommodated the Somali-Ethiopian conflict, which is warranted by its uncontested relevance to the former, at some stage of its course.

Resistance against European colonial powers, (in Guinea Bissau, Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, etc.) and resistance against white minority rule, (in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia) characterized most of Africa's independence struggles. In these cases, the colonizing powers or/and the minority governments were conspicuously identifiable from their subjects, if not by socio-cultural circumstances but by skin pigmentation. These disparities, though polarized the conflicts, served as cohesive forces within the nationalist blocs against domination. In most cases, this provided nationalist leaders with readily supportive natives, fully fledged support of independent African states and with the sympathy of extra-continental countries and organizations.

Eritrea's case, safe the Namibian and Western Saharan questions that shared remarkable parallels with differed from all other African colonial questions in that it was an 'African-on-African colonization'. Ethiopia, the colonizing power is an immediate neighbor of the

colony, relatively, sharing much commonality. These commonalities have had far-reaching implications in shaping and complicating Eritrea's quest for self-determination in a way that favored the Ethiopian colonial claims. Hence, obscured the prospects for Eritrea's right for self-determination and making the task of national emancipation more formidable. This is where the Eritrean cause derives its first and most important feature making it somewhat exceptional from its peers. This may not mean much, unless some light is shed on the far-reaching implications as to how this has complicated matters.

Although, the historic and economic ties between Eritrea and Ethiopia were predominantly, one of aggression, resistance, and sporadic cooperation, their historic, cultural, and economic ties, brought by territorial proximity, should not be overlooked. These proximities produced two mutually contradicting interpretations of history, one of Ethiopia based on historical unity and the dissenting view of Eritrean nationalists that contended otherwise. As the result, Eritrean and Ethiopia conflict was from the start beset with these differential interpretations of history making it rather more difficult to external observers to determine the precise and objective nature of Eritrea's problem. This coupled with Ethiopia's diplomatic capability the appalling consequence of these perceived affinities got their way into the international diplomatic circles. Thus, this is where the work of many academic analysts came into the scene. First, they are the ones who not only carried it all the way to the international circle, but in the mean time, they also replicated the Ethiopian version of the story. Consequently, this threw the Eritrea's legitimate question for self-determination in to a fierce controversy. For instance, the pre-liberation international political academic discourse on Eritrean ambitions for independence had played a significant role in shaping international public opinion.[2] Their contention that reckoned upon Ethiopia's 'three thousand continuum' stance [3] similarly concluded that Eritrea's cause was Ethiopia's internal affair rather than one of

[2] Iyob, op. cit.,p.27

[3] One, held by Eritreans maintain that Eritrea was 'naturally' and historically a separate entity, which should rightly be independent of Ethiopia for ethnic, religious and historical reasons. On the other side Ethiopians view Eritrea as their country's 'lost' province which was naturally and rightfully hers for ethnic, religious and historical reasons.

colonization. This discourses militated against Eritrea's probabilities of securing an early international sympathy and acceptance.

1.2 Aims and Motivation

As noted above, historic, linguistic, demographic, geographic, and other perceived proximities between Eritrea and Ethiopia have had unfavorable bearing on the former's right for self-determination. Moreover, the Ethiopian diplomatic machinery efficiently used these proximities in attempting to implicate Eritrean nationalists with regional Arab and Islamic countries and organizations. Primary issues, actors, and dynamics to the process had been regarded internal. Yet, as Terrence has observed "the conflict … has also taken place in a regional and international context that sometimes significantly shaped the confusing dynamics of the struggle."[4] Therefore, besides internal factors, interventions from external powers, regional and global alike, had complicated and protracted the struggle. Indeed, many who have written on this conflict have used the metaphor of an Eritrean David against the Ethiopian Goliath to describe the sheer size of the two warring parties. In seeking to go beyond this demonstration, however, Ruth Iyob has taken this Biblical story further to accentuate the external intervention, which favored Ethiopia against Eritrea.

> In this modern version of the classic confrontation between a small territory and its giant neighbor, it appeared, until the very end, that God had favored Goliath and not David. [5]

The major argument underlying this research is: the reasons of intervention were largely built on flawed interpretations of the goals of the struggle and the identity of an independent Eritrea. This work will also argue that the misinterpretations and the subsequent interventions generated their legitimacy from an international public opinion (opinion of the international community), which largely misconstrued the Eritrean

[4] Edmond J. Keller, Africa In The new International Order; Rethinking State Sovereignty And Regional Security, 1996, p.95

[5] Ruth Iyob , The Eritrean Struggle for Independence; Domination, resistance, nationalism 1941-1993, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.5.

nationalist movement as pro-Arab. This paper, thus, specifically sets out to trace and explain the genesis and the consequences of this public opinion and its impact on the revolution. It will also give space to discuss how the internal process of the struggle, especially the formative years, had in some ways reinforced the very opinion, which dragged the struggle from behind. In so doing the researcher intends to briefly look into the internal dynamism of the struggle itself.

The paper aims to look at the extent and effects of foreign intervention in Eritrea by regional powers[6]. The subtitles represent the stages of intervention, as we deem it. Eritrea was initially perceived by regional and international powers as a Muslim and potentially an Arab state. This was a misperception, which triggered the Eritrean nationalist struggle to be seen as 'an Arab inspired secessionism.' Some regional governments that held this view saw an independent Eritrea as a strategic threat to their national interests. These contrasting perceptions became so persistent that they compromised the legitimate rights of Eritrea for self-determination. Ultimately, this led to intervention by regional powers, pro and against, the struggle based on their respective misperceptions.

1.3 Rationale

A number of reasons are imperative to undertake this study. They are,

- The Eritrean question was one of the earliest security challenges to the United Nations as well as the Organization of African Unity after the Second World War. In fact it predates the latter; as it is the longest independence struggle against a fellow 'African Empire'[7].

- The bulk of the existing literature on Eritrean war of independence is pro-Ethiopia. These pro-Ethiopian academic discourses have depicted a largely self-reliant struggle, by most standards, as the tutelage of the Arab world. Thus, it is crucial to

[6] Regional powers in this context include; The Sudan, United Arab Republic (Egypt), Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, and Israel.
[7] Ethiopia was an empire as the country's constitution of 1955 says.

scrutinize the extent of the distortions and misrepresentations in retrospect. This will expose the truth that was neglected by both policy makers and academics alike.

- The war in Eritrea was one of greatest driving forces behind the conflicts in the Horn. It served as a leverage of internal political changes and partially, a factor of power imbalances in the region.

- Eritrea's struggle for independence was one of the rare cases of misrepresented struggles, whose aims and goals were totally distorted to serve the interests of other powers. This, compounded by the negative impact of alleged foreign material support would amply demonstrate the influence of diplomacy as an effective dimension of war in Africa and specifically at this corner of the continent.

- This was an African independence struggle where the generations old Arab-Israeli conflict had a close bearing. This will show the spillover effect of regional or/and international disputes, and demonstrate the applicability of linkage of issues, and manipulation of facts in the pursuit of 'national interest.'

- Last but not the least, the peculiarity of this war was not only the number of foreign countries, involved in different ways, but also the fact that the Eritrean war was a conflict where immediate strategic interests overrode the Cold War ideological alliances. In some instances, the ideological commitments and other national interests of the intervening forces clashed against their very own security considerations.

1.4 Statement of problem

Most conflicts in Africa, intra-state or inter-state, have not been immune from foreign intervention. However, direct interventions ranged from a single state with a few dozen of technical personnel to a host of states committing thousands of troops and billions worth of armaments. Not all foreign interventions necessarily share common characteristics and pursue similar objectives. This means intervening states often devise

different designs and multitude of justifications for their involvement. But, most of the justifications revolve around national security, territorial claims, ideological underpinnings, and avowed or implicit hegemonic concerns.

One of the conflicts, which attracted huge foreign intervention, was Eritrea's war against Ethiopia. For the reasons that will be discussed later the two super powers alternatively along with regional tributaries, including distant proxies say Cuba, North Korea, East German, threw the lot of their weight behind Ethiopia's war machine spear-headed against Eritreans. In addition to the questions posed hereunder, other questions that could further enrich this work would perhaps, evolve in the course of the discussion. Meantime, this report seeks to answer the following major questions:

- What was the reason[s] that lured the Middle Eastern powers into the Eritro-Ethiopian conflict?
- What role, if any, did the internal dynamism of the struggle had on other countries to intervene?
- How helpful and reliable was the help which Arab countries allegedly rendered to Eritrea? Which countries extended their help most and for what purpose?
- Was Arab support to Eritrea a decisive factor for the struggle to win?
- What implications did that support have on the course of the struggle?

1.5 The Argument

Eritrea having won its *de facto* independence in May 1991 through arms two years later conducted an internationally monitored referendum[8] to "provide legitimacy for the freedom struggle."[9] Hence, successfully ending the war on both equally daunting fronts, domestic and international, the war had been fought. Normally, where locally driven conflicts became internationalized and interlinked with regional and international actors,

[8] This referendum delivered a resonant 99.805 percent mandate for independence that realized the long awaited and hard fought dream of Eritreans. As a result, on 27 May 1993, Eritrea received recognition and became the 182nd member of the United Nations, a day that marks the culmination of the armed struggle in the re-birth of a legitimate nation-state.

[9] Muhammad Ibrahim, 'Interview with Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki, Arab News, August 16, 1992.

their nature is inevitably altered.[10] Eritrea's war of independence was not immune from this unavoidable but regrettable fate. This work will not take aboard and discuss every intervening power, for it will primarily concentrate on regional involvement with some reference to international actor's and developments.

The literature on Eritrea's war, albeit non exhaustive, attaches Arab intervention "with a mixture of affective and instrumental motives." [11] In spite of that the former is, however, seldom referred to be the major factor in comparison to the second and more 'pronounced' motive, the desire on part of Arab states to establish the Red Sea as an 'Arab Lake'. [12] Practically, the availability and type of Arab support to Eritrea depended on the motives of intervention. To fully understand the dynamics and nature of Middle Eastern countries' intervention in Eritrea's war of independence it is, then important to ascertain and analyze the interests and fears of these regional states. Therefore, in an attempt to piece together the whole picture and assess Arab intervention in the Eritrean struggle, we hypothesize;

Arab intervention in Eritrea's war of independence has had three unintended outcomes on the struggle, both internally and externally;

(1) Internal

The nationalist camp was marred with internal problems, which culminated in the proliferation of antagonistic factions. Thus, independence was effectively delayed by the uneasy relations among these organizations and its further deterioration into bloody fratricidal wars. Undeniably, Arab states favored unity among Eritrean liberation forces, and many had taken initiatives to that end. Yet, it is also equally indisputable that the intentions and nature of mediations have had detrimental outcomes. Not to mention that

[10] Keller, op. cit., p.95.
[11] As used by Alexi the affective motive of Arab countries represents the feeling on part of the Arab states that Eritrea is an Arab land and its people are Muslim Arabs and the instrumental motives, of course, are the tendencies of most Arab states to use the Eritrean war as an instrument of advancing their respective national interests.
[12] Alexis Heracliedes, The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics, London, F. Cass, 1991, p. 191.

some even, directly or indirectly, played one faction against another and contributed to the further atomization of the independence movement. Lastly, it is also worth mentioning that some conservative Arab countries, like Saudi Arabia tended to use the Eritrean cause as a counter- balancing force across the Red Sea, hence, did not want an independent Eritrea under the leadership of the more pragmatic, socialist and relatively independent EPLF.

(2) External Legitimacy

There is a sharp controversy as to how the Eritrean cause was dragged into the spiral of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some contend that Arab involvement triggered Israeli response and the others argue otherwise. In any case, the identification of Eritrea with the Arab world reduced the legitimacy of the independence movements in the eyes of non-Arab external actors —

(a) By making the Eritrean struggle appear to be aligned with the Arab side of the Middle East conflict, effectively alienating the struggle from Israel and her sympathizers. Furthermore, Ethiopia made the best out of this circumstance diplomatically by establishing and maintaining a 'regime of truth', which successfully characterized the Eritrean conflict as 'secessionist and Arab-inspired'.[13]

(b) The genesis of this twist of fate has been discussed later in the report. This 'regime of truth', which was accepted throughout the regional orders, however, made it much more difficult for the struggle to get significant sympathy either from individual countries or their collective constituencies. In African context, the Organization of African unity (OAU), which represented the collective constituency, for all practical reasons and legal constraints was more of a barrier than a help to Eritrea's cause. Individual member states of the OAU, especially those south of the Sahara, were convinced that Eritrea's struggle was an instrument of Arab expansion in Africa. They also saw it, as

[13] Iyob, op. cit., p. 93.

an illegitimate internal challenge to the Ethiopian sovereignty, and a challenge to the principle of 'the sanctity of colonial borders' as enshrined in the OAU charter. Eritrean question was feared as it could set dangerous precedence that could lead into 'African Balkanization' given Africa's inherited fragile state system.

(3) Finance/Resources

As a result of the points spelt out in number two of the hypothesis, the Eritrean independence movements had difficulty in mobilizing resources. There were even circumstances when the struggle leaders (especially of the ELF), where in order to secure Arab support, presented Eritrea as a would-be Muslim/Arab state.[14] Though this stance is said to serve as an opportunistic tactic, the pro-Arab and Muslim posture of some Eritrean movements collided with the 'affecting motive'[15], of Arab states. Hence, this collision lent a resemblance of substance to the Ethiopian 'Regime of truth', as a result left the struggle to survive on scanty local resources. This was one major reason that compelled the EPLF to wage a largely self-reliant and protracted people's war against Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa is not only the sub-region where the core countries to the conflict (Ethiopia and Eritrea) are located, but also procure their geo-strategic edge. Given the geo-strategic significance of the region, the political dynamic at play, and instability that reigned in this region; the geo-strategic and geo-political context where these conflicts had taken place merits a closer look.

1.6 The Geo-political Context

The name (Horn of Africa) figuratively refers to the geographical region falling within that horn-shaped protrusion of landmass off Africa's northeastern part that separates the Red sea from the Indian Ocean. In the absence of obvious physical and political

[14] Alexi, op. cit., p. 187.

[15] As used by Alexi the affective motive of Arab countries represents the feeling on part of the Arab states that Eritrea is an Arab land and its people are Muslim Arabs and the instrumental motives, of course, are the tendencies of most Arab states to use the Eritrean war as an instrument of advancing their respective national interests.

boundaries, a precise definition of the area has been lacking. Many writers either preferred to write unanimously or came up with their own contextual definitions, which could provide them with sufficient parameters for their respective discussions. At this juncture, this report we do not pretend to give one generally acceptable definition, rather pick one of these contextual definitions. We have chosen the geographic definition of the Horn, which includes Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, the Sudan and Somalia.[16] This definition not only serves best for the purpose at hand but it is also a middle way between the narrowest and widest possible definitions. According to the former, the Horn constitutes only the Somali inhabited areas of the region viz. "the easternmost projection of Africa… Somalia, South East or all of Ethiopia, and sometimes Djibouti."[17] This definition falls short of meeting the parameters of this report as it has left out countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan), which are central to our discussion. The other but more inclusive, devised to serve a different purpose, is the 'Greater Horn of Africa' definition comprising Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.[18] Obviously, this definition is unnecessarily inclusive, with four more countries on the list, and it could possibly dilute the concentration of the discussion by diverting the reader from the core area.

The prior brief discussion suffices to clear some doubts pertaining the geographic limits of the Horn. Nonetheless, the disparities associated with the definitional aspect are not central to the area's strategic significance but the location is. Zartman who rightly observed the "fluid geopolitical structure of the area" noted "geopolitically, the Horn of Africa is neither an exclusive part of neither North Africa nor Black Africa nor East Africa nor Middle East nor the Indian Ocean area, but is partly in all of these. [19] It is from this geopolitical character that the region derives its utmost strategic importance, not

[16] The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Regional Conflict and Superpower Rivalry in the Horn of Africa, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra, April 1984, p.1
[17] Merriam Webster's Geographical Dictionary, 3rd Ed, 1997, p. 495
[18] "Conflict and crisis in the Greater Horn of Africa," Ken Menkhaus; John Prendergast, Current History, Vol. 98, No. 628, May 1999, p.213. The Greater Horn of Africa Climate outlook Forum, however, on top of these countries also includes Tanzania.
[19] William I. Zartman, Ripe for Resolution; Conflict and Intervention in Africa, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p.82.

from the region on its own virtues.[20] Clearly, the India Ocean, the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, and the Suez regions have been caught in a tangled web of the big powers' struggle for political as well as strategic hegemony. [21] In fact, because of its geopolitical 'fluidity' the Horn of Africa went through dramatic upheavals transforming it from relative neglect to intense courtship by regional and global powers. Other than the flux of its geopolitical nature, there are two more reasons that give the area its strategic importance. First, it is positioned at a strategic watching-post, which dominates, as it does, the Bab-el-Mandeb Straits, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea area. This was further pronounced by the emergence of the region as an 'intermediate station' with the opening of the Suez Canal since 1869.[22] This was augmented by the [Horn of Africa's] … proximity to the oil rich Middle East and the transport routes to and from the Middle East to the industrial oil consuming countries.[23]

These three factors gave the sub-region its geopolitical edge, they also account for expensive international intervention in the region. Indeed, it is because of these two reasons that, of all the great international issues, the Arab-Israeli confrontation becomes most dangerous to the Horn,[24] and vice-versa. This is so, because, the Arab and Islamic politics of the Middle East, as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict, have spread to the … Horn of Africa. [25] Conversely, the superpower rivalry in the Middle East has also been indirectly caught up in the ancient conflicts of the Horn of Africa through their respective tributaries in the Middle East. As Shepherd remarked, "No other region of the world presents a greater confusion and conflict of regional and global interests."[26] Hence, by

[20] The Horn, already one of those regions, which are poorly endowed with natural resources, is rather a place of natural and man-made calamities. Especially, the latter, expressed in terms of internecine warfare and foreign intervention has contributed significantly to economic and state collapse and ushered in an era of mass starvation.
[21] --------, 'The OAU and the Secession Issue', Africa Report, vol.20, No.6,Nov.-Dece. 1975, p.36.
[22] Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean Region of Conflict or "zone of Peace", London, C. Hurst &Co. (publishers) Ltd. P.150.
[23] The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Report, op. cit., p.1.
[24] Rachelle Marshall, 'Israeli Arms Will Block Food Shipments to Hungry Eritreans', The Middle East, March 1990, Page 8.
[25] George W. Shepherd, jr., The Trampled Grass: Tributary States and Self-reliance in the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, New York, Praeger, 1987, p. 68.
[26] loc. Cit.

internationalizing the regional conflicts around the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, the United States and the Soviet Union have transformed the region of the Horn into a more serious potential flashpoint.[27] Undeniably, this was encouraged, of course, by local contenders in the power struggle who in their part, to reshape the Horn's political contours (Ethiopian expansionism and Somali irredentism) have gone out of their way to seek foreign allies to buttress their military, technical and economic needs.[28] Ethiopia, the core state[29] of the region, had the main sources of its strategic importance and the major sources for its major problems in Eritrea. Then where does Eritrea's geopolitical importance lay?

1.7 Geopolitical significance of Eritrea

Eritrea with a total land area of 121,320 square kilometers - slightly larger than either England or Pennsylvania- is populated by 3.5 million people (July 1993 est.). Eritrea shares borders with Ethiopia, stretching for 912 km from southwest to southeast; the Sudan (605 km) from northwest to southwest; Djibouti (113 km) on the southeast. Upon its independence Eritrea retained its entire Red Sea coast (1151 km) that forms the eastern border of the country; leaving Ethiopia landlocked. This border is the most important to the country as it gives the country access to the world's busiest shipping lanes and the Middle East oil fields. At the nearest point the country is only 32 km across from Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Including Dahlak Archipelagos, Eritrea also claims over three hundred islands in the Red Sea, some of which are located at the mouth of the Bab-el-Mendeb. Eritrea in relation to its population size also owns a mosaic of nine linguistic groups. These groups-Bilen, Nara, Afar, Tigre, Kunama, Hadareb, Saho, Rashaida, and Tigrinya- are almost equally divided into Christianity and Islam with very insignificant minority of Animists.

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[27] ---------, 'Cold War on the Horn of Africa' African Affairs, vol. 77, no. 306, January 1978, pp.7.
[28] Colin Legum & Bill Lee, Conflict in the Horn of Africa , London, African Publishing Company, 1977, p.9.
[29] "A strategic vision for Africa: the Kampala movement…," Francis Mading Deng, I. William Zartman, 2002, p.198; "The United States and the Horn of Africa: an analytical study of …," Okbazghi Yohannes, 1997, p.353.

Eritrea's immense strategic importance, and in a sense its history, flows from this unique maritime position. This had, to the largest extent, dictated the course of Eritrean history since antiquity, as this had lured several powers to come and try to assume control over the country. The Turks came first in the middle of the sixteenth century (1557), then the Egyptian khedive in 1869 to be followed by the Italians in 1890. The British, having ousted Italy in 1941, occupied the country as 'enemy territory' and administered it as a 'caretaker government' till 1952. Eritrea was, ones again, to fall into the control of another colonial power 'Ethiopian imperial state'' through a dramatic and quite unfashionable way sponsored by the United States and cohorts.

The US-led politico-diplomatic maneuvers that helped and subsequently legitimized Ethiopia's control over Eritrea were sanctioned by three but interrelated developments. One, with the opening of the Suez Canal the Red Sea became an important sea-lane as a short cut route to the Far East, the traditional center of gravity to Western interests. Later, however, with the discovery, in 1930s, large reserves of crude oil in the Middle East brought these interests onto the eastern shores of the Red Sea itself. Two more factors, the advent of the Cold War and the onset of the Middle East conflict with all their strategic ramifications, nevertheless, politically charged these essentially economic interests. Hence, heavily weighed against the peace and security well being of the countries in and around the Middle East including the Horn of Africa, which Eritrea forms an important part. Thus, in recent times, Eritrea's strategic importance combined with its economic potentialities only compounded the problem; as a result, its right for self-determination was sacrificed for a '*higher cause*'- at the altar of strategic interests of the United States.

This report has taken a sequential discussion of events owing to the largely linear development of Eritrea's political history. Perhaps, it would be an artificial exercise if local factors are isolated to accentuate external factors, particularly in the case of foreign involvement into conflict situations. Thus, this report gives a good deal of attention to the domestic and historical background information. The second chapter, therefore, raises the

question of legitimacy and its historical development. Chapter three attempts to discuss the genesis of the Eritrean question during the British period and the debates in the United Nations. The subsequent chapters deal with the development of the armed resistance with few relevant tips on their internal organization and goals. Chapter five makes the bulk of this report and it is the main body that discusses the central questions. It provides an extensive coverage of the reasons and impacts of nine countries' involvement, on individual basis, except four grouped into two for reasons stated in the chapters. Chapter six approaches the role of the organization of African Unity, both as a source of legitimacy and as part of the conflict. It will set out b tracing the inherent structural weaknesses of the continental organization, not with the intention of assessing, but debate how these weaknesses were shaped and manipulated by Ethiopia to seal off Eritrea diplomatically.

The following chapter, therefore, attempts to indentify, in a preliminary way, the fallacies of Ethiopia's mythical interpretation of history upon which this 'regime of truth' was squarely founded. Some references of distant historical facts, which might sound less relevant with the topic at hand, will be made to contest the flaws of Ethiopia's historical claim on Eritrea. A detailed survey of literature will follow in an attempt to give the reader an insight on the existing literature, labeled 'Ethiopianist literature', that is largely credited for shaping the prism of distorted lenses through which Eritrea was to be seen internationally vis-à-vis Ethiopia.

Chapter Two:

Eritrean Question in Perspective

> The lurid image of an embattled Christian state attacked by Muslims and supported by Arab states, has been a frequent theme in Western reporting on Eritrea. Even with more information about the Eritrean struggle available in the mid- and late-1970s journalists still write of 'Muslim secessionists in Eritrea' or 'Arab-backed Eritrean guerrillas'.[30]
>
> **David Pool,**
> Eritrea; Africa's longest War

2. 1 Introduction

States make boundary claims because they believe that either the people (popular unit) or the land (territorial unit) in question are or were theirs.[31] In same fashion successive Ethiopian rulers and Ethiopianists[32] employed both (territorial and popular

[30] Pool, David, Eritrea Africa's Longest War, London, Anti-slavery Society Human Rights Series Report No.3- 1980, p.47.

[31] I. William Zartman, 'The Foreign and Military Politics of African Boundary Problems', in Carl Gosta Widstrand (ed.) African Boundary problems, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, UPPSALA, 1969.

units) to vindicate their contention of the '*organic unity'* of Ethiopia and Eritrea. This argument was based, however, on scanty mythical evidences relating to events going as far back as 3,000 years, which Iyob refers to as '*a 3000-year historical continuum'*.[33] Objectively the main historical events and processes that are often cited to substantiate this claim are essentially true. Nevertheless, the argument suffers from two major fallacies. One is that the premises of the contention are uninterrupted history and independent existence of the Ethiopia state since before the Christian era. Out of this stems the second, the tendency to use classical civilizations and names - Axum, Ethiopia and Abyssinia- interchangeably with present day Ethiopia to substantiate the former. Though far distant past, it is imperative to briefly discuss the major historical discourses that are central to the arguments.

2.2 Ethiopia's Mythical Unity

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus chronicled the classical world's fascination with the Land of Punt, which roughly included today's countries of the Horn. As any other part of the world this historic nebula of landmass had in the course of long historical processes evolved into what presently are known states of the Horn of Africa. At any given time in the past the land of Punt assumed different names and had different connotations referring to different geographical units. One earliest landmark of these historical processes was represented by the Axumite civilization.

Mulatu Wubneh wrote that Ethiopia traces its origins to the ancient kingdom of Axume, which he says emerged in the sixth century B.C. in the highland plateau of Tigray (Northern Ethiopia) and Eritrea.[34] Col. Mengistu's, Ethiopia's former military dictator, put it in plain words claimed; "Eritrea has always been an 'integral part of Ethiopia', so much so that it had been one of the cradles of Ethiopian history and culture.[35] These two

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[32] Refers to Ethiopian political elites and both writers and academics alike who share Ethiopia's 'three thousand continuum' interpretations of Ethiopian history.

[33] The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism ... ." Ruth Iyob, p.14.

[34] Mulatu Wubneh, 1988,p. 9. Peter Vanneman and Martinn James, Soviet Thrust into the Horn of Africa; The Next Targets', Strategic Review, Vol. 6, No. 2, Spring 1978, p.35.

[35] loc. Cit. Vanneman

are typical expressions of the essence of the three thousand historical continuum theses. Margery Perham, in her book, "The Government of Ethiopia" dismissed such assertion as follows: "The claim is based upon some rather indefinite reference to early history and migrations, almost every sentence of which cries out for comment or correction." [36] Duncan, the last British administrator of Eritrea, who called it "confused and episodic story" explains that for a large part of this period, the area now known as Eritrean [itself] was on the peripheries of three loosely administered empires. [37]

Beyond doubt, parts of northern Ethiopia (present day Tigrai) and the Eritrean highland plateau formed the core of the Axumite state.[38] In fact Eritrea was more important as the Axumite kingdom prospered and thrived on maritime trade with the outside world through the ancient port of Adulis- presently in Eritrea. However, Ethiopia's admission of Eritrea as the bedrock of Axumite kingdom should not be taken at face value, for there is an imbedded presumptions- uninterrupted history and independent existence of Ethiopia since the ancient Axumite kingdom, which it was meant to serve. The spurious reasoning is simple and revealing and it goes like this; if Eritrea was the core of Axum, and if Axum was the origin of Ethiopia, by the same token Eritrea then not only was part of Ethiopia, but it also formed the core of the Ethiopian state. However, as Pool put it, in the ebb and flow of Ethiopian royal authority Eritrea was independent of higher control but more usually the vassal of the ruler of Tigrai, the northern kingdom of Ethiopia in those days.[39] Even at those times when Ethiopian emperors became powerful enough to extend their authority beyond their traditional realm, tribute was the core of the political relationship between Eritrea and these Tigrian kingdoms until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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[36] Margery D. Perham, The Government of Ethiopia , Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969, p.15
[37] Duncan Cameron Cumming, 'The Disposal of Eritrea', Middle East Journal, Vol.7 No.1 Winter 1953.
[38] Bereket Habte Selassie, 'From British Rule to Federation and Annexation', Behind the War in Eritrea,, p. 33
[39] Pool, op. cit.,P.15.

Addis Hiwet, an Ethiopian scholar, grasping the subtle nature of this argument wrote, "Not all fell into this deep-seated myth that for so long enshrined Ethiopia- both the name and the country- still blurs genuine historical understanding. Ethiopia's existence as modern state does not…extend beyond the 1900…"[40] On top of this, the size of Axum, was proportional to the strength of its rulers. For instance, at its zenith, in the 3rd century A.D, Axumite kingdom is said to have "stretched as far south as the northern fringes of Tigrai, and as far north/west as Nubia", in present day Sudan. [41] Bereket reinforcing this view wrote; it must be noted, in passing, that present day Ethiopia, which is a creation of Menelik's imperial expansion in the 1880's and 1890's, in no way corresponds to the ancient Axumite kingdom.[42] Mulatu, who dismissed Hiwet's and Selassie's assertions a propaganda to serve particular political and ideological objectives, alleges about the existence of overwhelming evidence based on historical facts, upholding the fact that Ethiopia and Abyssinia have been used interchangeably to refer to the mountain kingdom for about 1,500 years.[43] David Buxton in his book 'The Abyssinians' stated out right that "Modern Ethiopia directly descended from the Axum Kingdom."[44] However, as stated in his book and others the name Abyssinia comes from the corrupted naming of the *Habasht*, a South-Arabian tribe that settled in the southern Eritrean and northern Tigrai. The question that comes to the inquisitive mind is; How come then this small tribe came to represent the whole of present day Ethiopia? The inexorable fact is, "Abyssinian history before the 19th century was exceedingly obscure".[45] Thus, the course of Ethiopian history could safely be understood from late 19th century on wards.

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[40] Addis Hiwet, Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution, London, Review of African Political Economy Occasional Publication No. 1,1975.
1975, p.1.

[41] Behind the War in Eritrea, Bereket Habte Selassie, From British Rule to Federation and Annexation, pp.32-33 Mulatu Wubneh, p.9 cited from Taddesse Tamrat, Ethiopia, the Red Sea and the Horn, in The Cambridge History of Africa, vol.3, (ed.) by Roland Oliver, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp.98-108 ; yuri M. Kobishchanov, Axum, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979, p.64.

[42] Behind the War in Eritrea, Bereket Habte Selassie, From British Rule to Federation and Annexation, p. 33

[43] Mulatu Wubneh, p. 24.

[44] David Buxton, The Abyssinians, GB Southampton, The Camelot Press Ltd., 1970, p.37.

[45] Frank Hardie, The Abyssinian Crisis, London, BT Batsford Ltd., 1974, p.9.

Donald Levine, in his book 'Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society'[46] wrote; "For disenchanted moderns and for romantics of many times, the name Ethiopia has evoked the alluring image of a faraway land. This image has a notable ancestry."[47] In tracing this ancestry, he goes into great details of ancient fascinations of classical writers, in whose writings the name 'Ethiopia' erratically appears. Penchant of Ethiopia's fabulous past Levine maintained that Ethiopia persisted "long after the world had been mapped and the sources of the Nile discovered". In a stark bid to bridge the classical use of the word 'Ethiopia' to its present utility, he assertively conceded; "The current accessibility of Ethiopia by jet is advertised as an opportunity to "travel to a distant past".[48] Levine in an attempt to shore up his assertion paradoxically ended up reprehending those very sources, which he had depended upon immensely. Preliminary treatments of some of Liven's own quotes reveal the misplacement of his references to these classical writings, to mention but a few. Levine contradicted his own references by admitting that his references had "vague geographical identity of the subject, whether Ethiopia is taken to mean all of Black Africa, the Nubia of Napata and Meroe, the Abyssinia of Aksum, or the later Christian kingdom of Nubia." He even claimed "…Christian references tended to confuse Ethiopia or Abyssinia with both Nubia and India for nearly a thousand years." So did he claim "For Greeks and Romans generally…the name Ethiopian denoted a person of dark color- literally, of burnt face..." His last assertion "The medieval imagination located this fabulous kingdom in Asia-now in India, now in Persia, now in China..." [49] could be taken as a package of the innate contradiction of his assertion.

[46] As the book's title well indicates, Levine gave a great deal of attention to 'Ethiopia' historical development form antiquity to modern times. As Ruth Iyob argued that this 'Greater Ethiopia' thesis advanced by Levine served as the basis for 'modern scholarly works' of justifying Ethiopia's claims of three-thousand years historical continuum. Donald Levine, whose book is regarded as the source of contemporary Greater Ethiopia writers, is well written and well researched and provides rich survey and it is which goes far back to classical sources. Yet, it is to assert that Axum, Abyssinia and Ethiopia, are the direct ancestors of the present day Ethiopian state.

[47] Donald Levine, Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.1

[48] Ibid., p.3

[49] Donald op. cit.,, pp.1-8.

Levine's assertion runs in contradiction into the established historical facts that the Nubian Desert did not seem to have known the high plateau where Axum had been founded.[50] Axumites own first inscriptions show that they themselves applied the word 'Ethiopia' to the territory of the "Middle Nile" (Nubia). Indeed, at that time, Ethiopia was neither applied to Axum, nor did the Axumites describe themselves as 'Ethiopians'.[51]

In another encounter, Edward W. Blyden, in a discourse he delivered before the American Colonization Society, May 1880, agreed that there had been "considerable difference of opinion" in the "Christian world" as to which specific part of the world the "term Ethiopia must be understood as applying." [52] As Blyden own argument, the term 'Ethiopia' is a barrowed one, whose ancient use is not directly related to it present use, as Ethiopianist claim. He then stated that;

> It is pretty well established now, however, that by Ethiopia, is meant the continent of Africa, and by Ethiopians, the great race who inhabit that continent. The etymology of the word points to the most prominent physical characteristic of this people. [53]

The present day Ethiopia is not even in the scene when Blyden took the discussion further to the geographical limits of which Ethiopia would have been understood as applying. He quotes from what he calls "One of the most accurate authorities" for saying: 'The country which the Greeks and the Romans described as Ethiopia, and the Hebrews as Cush, lay to the south of Egypt, and embraced, in its most extended sense, the modern Nubia, Senaar, Kordofan, etc., and in its more definite sense, the kingdom of Meroe, from the junction of the Blue and White branches of the Nile to the border of Egypt. He contends "to the writers of the Bible… when they speak of Ethiopia, they meant the ancestors of the black-skinned and woolly-haired people…"[54]

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[50] Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, A History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1, 1928, pp. vii-viii. Cited in Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, London, Faber, 1969, p.14.
[51] Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, London, Faber, 1969, p.14.
[52] Blyden, op. cit., pp.3-9.
[53] loc. Cit.
[54] loc. Cit.

2.3 Literature Review: The Praxis of Ethiopia's Mythical Unity

According to the perspectives held on the legitimacy of the Eritrean cause, the existing literature has been many and varied. We believe, however, some simple categories might help to identify the main themes. To this end, roughly, the body of literature can be divided into two broad categories.

The first approach regarded the Eritrean problem as an "internal affair" of the Ethiopian state. This puts it under the 'secessionist insurgency' and/or 'sectarian nationalism' category, whose premise squarely resides on 'the historic unity' of 'greater Ethiopia'. This approach tried to interpret, it in terms of 'core-periphery' thesis. Christopher Clapham wrote that Eritrea despite its historical and strategic importance to Ethiopia…has become increasingly peripheralized over the last century.[55] He further contends that the Eritrean struggle stemmed out of 'marginalization of what had once been the core region of Ethiopia' and the 'political incapacity of the imperial system of government".[56] The core-periphery conceptualization of the Eritrean question was prone to inconsistency for there was no core to be identified as Ethiopia, in the first place. Imperial Ethiopia was a political superstructure embracing numerous political entities and nationalities,[57] brought together through forceful and spur-of-the-moment process at the end of 1890s.

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Ethiopian rulers were preoccupied in extending their authority over 'ancestral territories' with differing degrees of consolidation and centralization of power. [58] After an earlier autonomous existence, these component political entities were, therefore, incorporated only at the turn of 19th century.

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[55] Christopher Clapham, Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.205.

[56] Iyob, op. cit., p.12. Clapham, op. cit., 206.

[57] Bairu Tafla, 'Historical Background to the Conflicts in Ethiopia and the Prospects for Peace', in Peter Woodward and Murray Forsyth (eds.), Conflict And Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its Alternatives, England, Sartmouth Publishing Company, 1994, p.8.

[58] Getatchew Haile, 'The Unity and Territorial Integrity of Ethiopia', The Journal of Modern African Studies, vol.24 No.3, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, P.465. Godfrey Morrison, Minority Rights Group Report, No. 5, October, 1971, p.23.

The process started with the rise of two centralist monarchs -Tewodros II (1855-1868) and Yohannis IV (1871-1889) -and was completed at the time of Menelik II. The incorporation was realized by what is often called the 'South Marches' of Ethiopian emperors. It was not utter coincidence that these marches took place at the time of European powers' bid for larger share of the African continent. In a similar manner, Ethiopia that had participated in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 in an observer status, scrambled against European powers for its 'share'. In fact, Menelik in a circular to European powers stated his intent of reinstating 'the ancient frontiers' of Ethiopia, which he said stretched from Khartoum in the north and as far down to Lake Nyanza (present day Malawi) in the south'.[59] Menelik's extravagant claim was unattainable, which otherwise would have contradicted to the interests his more powerful European competitors. This, however, does not rule out territorial gains that Ethiopia made in scramble by "incorporating within its territory virtually all that part of present-day Ethiopia"[60] that expanded its landmass from 345, 000 to 800,000 square kilometers.[61]

Ethiopia's victory over Italy at the Battle of Adwa (1896) caused the powers of Europe to take serious notice of Menelik, and several of them to send diplomatic representatives to the empire. [62] Ethiopia entered into long drawn formal negotiations with European powers culminating into nine border treaties curving out its borders. [63] The agreed upon borders, by default, secured Ethiopia *de jure* recognition over the 'newly conquered' lands. Owing to these historical episodes, Ethiopia maintained it's 'independence' and negotiated the delineation of its own borders. However, the ostensible claim of Ethiopia's long and uninterrupted distinct history is not warranted. Ethiopia is as old a state, in its present shape, as Eritrea and other African states.

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[59] Rod to Salisbury, 4 May 1987 (F. O. 1/32). Cited in John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1974, p.23.

[60] Christopher Clapham, 'Historical Incorporation and Inheritance' in Timothy M. Shaw & Olajid Aluko (eds.), The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis, Trowbridge, Redwood Burn Ltd., 1984,p.80.

[61] Andre' Davy, *Ethiopie d'hier et d'aujourd' hui*, Paris, 1970, p.101. cited in Amare Tekle 'The Determinants of the Foreign Policy of Revolutionary Ethiopia', Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.27, No.3, September 1989, p.482.

[62] Anthony Sillery (second edition), Africa: A Social Geography, London, Duckworth,1972. p.150

[63] Levine, op. cit., p.12.

A sensible historical account of Ethiopian empire state calls for the ingredient political entities to be inevitably taken as units of analysis. This approach poses serious limitations to Ethiopianists' propensity to Ethiopia's mythical unity. Analyzing Ethiopian history regionally emphasizes the statement that there was never a single homogeneous core and periphery as "what was 'peripheral' was always relative to a particular level of hierarchy of centers".[64] Clapham asserts that not only the control of the local periphery was the "historic mission" or "manifest destiny" of the Ethiopian state but also "the power of the central government within the core had indeed varied directly in proportion to its control of the periphery."[65] In fact there was no a centralized power that constituted the 'core' of the empire from 1769 to 1855, a period of confusion called by Ethiopians 'the era of princes'.[66] Ullendorff, one of the foremost scholars on Ethiopia, describing this era remarked; "It was like the era of the Old Testament when there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." [67]

In the final analysis this category of opinion attributes Eritrea's war of independence to the contentious processes of state and nation building, the complex search for justice and equity, the difficult challenges of identity and governance, and the competition for scarce resources and sustainable development.[68] This approach had taken deeper roots and earned widespread acceptance. The major consequence of this school of thought was misinterpretation of the Eritrean struggle. According to some unexpected reasons, they managed to put into place the Ethiopian notion that the struggle was Arab driven.[69] This

[64] Donald Donham, 'Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian Empire: Themes in Social History', in Donald Donham and Wendy James (ed.), The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p.24.
[65] Clapham, op. cit., p.80, in Shaw & Aluko (eds.).
[66] Mordechai Abir, Ethiopia : the Era of the Princes : The Challenge of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855,London, Longmans, 1968, p.5.
[67] Edward Ullendorff, The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People, Oxford, Oxford University Press,1960, p.82. Cited in Sillery, op. cit., p.149.
[68] Terrence Lyons, 'The International Context of Internal War: Ethiopia/Eritrea', in Edmond J. Keller and Donald Rothchild (eds.), Africa and the New International Order: Studies of State Sovereignty and Regional Security, Boulder, Colo., Lynne Rienner, 1996, p.85.
[69] Ethiopian authorities sought to neutralize and beyond implicate Eritrea's nationalist movements with Arab powers of the Middle East by emphasizing Arab plots aimed at dismembering Ethiopia, the only non-Arab state on the Red Sea, by splitting Eritrea to make it an independent Arab state ultimately to

was designed to be more rewarding as it reiterated the stance held by Ethiopia. In this fashion that coagulated on an already extant flamboyant Ethiopian diplomatic image, personified by the Emperor, Haile Selassie. This helped the Emperor to gain a larger say and acceptance, than ever before on the Eritrean issue, on the international fora. This Ethiopianist literature [which Iyob accurately coined to name the literature which falls under this category] led to a great deal of attention being paid to Ethiopia's historical development form antiquity to modern times.[70] Ostensibly, this notion of linking Eritrean nationalism with a host of Arab states [conservatives and radicals alike] was endorsed and publicized by the pro-Ethiopia writers to the extent that it became too bold a valid conceptual reality that these same writers could not, themselves, tamper with.

This view was further compounded by the head and hectare mentality' which looked at Ethiopia in terms of its sheer population and geographic size, respectively. Writers, who dug themselves in the 'greater Ethiopia' myth, were not willing to accede to Eritrea's right for self-determination. They wrongly assumed that Ethiopian 'mythical unity' was at stake when Eritrea, which they deemed a smaller component of the 'Ethiopian empire', posed a legitimate question on the legality of the latter. Thus, this Ethiopianist literature posited any opposition to the coercive unity of greater Ethiopia "[71] especially that of Eritrea. These writers were chasing the whirlwind by setting out to defend a cause-unity of greater Ethiopia –which did not really exist.

In addition, there is a group of writers who fall under the 'Ethiopianist' category, whose premise to legitimize the Ethiopianist view necessitated the mounting of the subject into larger domain. Hagai Erlich,[72] whose book provides an extraordinarily rich survey of the literature and contains a wealth of information on Ethio-Eritrean conflict from an Israeli perspectives, maintains the view; The struggle over Eritrea and the Horn of Africa should

turn the Red Sea into an 'Arab Lake'. This was the major diplomatic card Ethiopia had and was readily accepted and endorsed by academic and media alike.

[70] Iyob, op. cit., p. 25.

[71] Iyob, op. cit., p. 80.

[72] Hagai Erlich, an Israeli historian on Ethiopia, who has contributed a well-documented analysis contends the outcome tend to be less a result of foreign intervention than the internal dynamics of both the Eritrean and Ethiopian revolutions than external interventions.

be viewed as an integral part of the Red Sea and Middle Eastern affairs rather than as an African conflict. Such an assertion would seem to be dwelling on the obvious…a significant innovation when compared against the background of the more distant past. [73]

He further argues that irrespective some of the failed Turkish attempts to conquer the area, throughout history, the Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East neglected the African coast of the Red Sea…and the medieval Arabs…conceived the Red Sea as a natural boundary. [74] The following quote from same book reveals his inbuilt bias in favor of the Ethiopianist category.

> All local actors in the Eritrean conflict (or in other major issues concerning the Horn of Africa) are directly connected, sometimes even closely allied, with Middle Eastern countries and Organizations.[75]

The Ethiopianist literature applied a commonly held belief that "relations around the Horn of Africa are structured, in perception and operation, around a Muslim encirclement of Ethiopian fortress-empire. Though the potential and sometimes actual alliance among Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia, backed by various other ready source of support across the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden, but also Libya, Egypt and Iran." a pattern which Zartman claims has been the dominant for at least three decades, even overriding Cold War alliances.[76] Mordechai Abir, a renowned Israeli political analyst in the Middle East, in his effort to endorse Zartman's portrayal, stated "the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia" as he calls it "is nearly surrounded by Moslem countries...” Abir sought to demonstrate that the kingdom is under continuous Arab/Muslim threat. As this paragraph could well reveal his stance, it is worth quoting it in full.

> The present non-Arab Ethiopia geographically constitutes the southern border of the Arab world. It controls a vital part of the Red

[73] Erlich, op. cit.,p.55.
[74] Ibid., p. 55.
[75] Loc. Cit., Erlich, 55
[76] Zartman, Ripe for Resolution, op. cit., p. 82.

> Sea Coast, has grazing areas crucial to tribes living in Somali Republic and source of two rivers which provide most of the water for the limited agriculture in Somalia, source of more than 70% of the water of the Nile upon which Ethiopia's northern neighbors, and especially Egypt, depends. [77]

Abir having provided this background, it is quite apparent, which category he will ally himself. He joined the camp of Ethiopianist writers who in an endeavor to sustain their "greater Ethiopia "argument adopted the "pro-Arab secessionist thesis". This thesis was substantiated by the pro-Ethiopian international stance casting Moslem separatism as a fundamental issue of that resistance.[78] This posited Eritrean struggle as an instrument of Pan-Arabism. Therefore, this group of writers constituted the second category.

These writers emphasize Ethiopia's 'historical links with Israel' and its 'traditional enmity with the Arabs countries' to substantiate their argument. On such argument comes from John Spencer, who opined; "in the decade of the 1960s…the Moslem countries of the Middle East were achieving independence and freedom *to vent their traditional hostility towards Ethiopia"* [emphasis added].[79] Out of such perception, Ayele also noted the close relationship between Israel and Ethiopia is a byproduct of Ethiopia's inability to stem the rising tide of hostility in the rest of the Arab world, which he said became more pronounced since 1967.[80] Apparently, in connection to the Ethiopian Jews, this historic tie might have some relevance. However, neither the historical sentiment nor fear of Soviet influence in the region was decisive factors for Israel to engage in the courtship of Ethiopia.[81] Rather it was largely out of "concerns for the small Jews community…along

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[77] Abir, 1978, p.60.
[78] Ruth, op. cit., p. 53.
[79] Spencer, John H., Ethiopia At Bay: A Personal Account of The Haile Selassie Years, Michigan, Reference Publications, Inc., 1984,p.introduction XIV.
[80] Ayele, Negussay, 'The Foreign Policy of Ethiopia', in Aluko, Olajide, Hodder and Stoughton (eds.), The Foreign Policies of African States, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1977,P.62.
[81] Ethan A. Nadelmann, 'Israel and Black Africa', The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.19, No.2, pp.193-4.Quoted in Peter Schwab, 'Israel's Weakened Position on the Horn of Africa', New Outlook, Tel Aviv, April 1978, pp. 21-27.

side strategic considerations" [82] that Israel had been one of Ethiopia's most reliable suppliers of military assistance.

The strategic interest was more pronounced than the historic ties Israel allegedly had with Ethiopia. Perhaps, the non-Arab state, other than Ethiopia, whose strategic interests would be most directly affected by the outcome of the Eritrean conflict, was Israel. [83] Israel that saw Eritrean rebels seeking independence as destabilizing factor in Ethiopia set out to prevent the establishment of an independent Eritrea[84] to secure a stable Ethiopia, which Israel saw it the only way out of her perceived security threats. But we find an imbedded fallacy in this as it implicitly accepts that Israel was already out there to look for regional allies. The importance of the narrow straits of Bab-el-Mendeb and Arab threats to harass Israel at this southern tip of the Red Sea is another often raised justification to Israel's special interest in Eritrea. They, thus, contend that Israel's strategy was primarily aimed at retaining freedom of navigation through the Red Sea by preventing the closure of this strait "the only access to its southern port of Eilat."[85] This became more pronounced when Egypt having Suez Canal under its control, attempted to blockade Israeli shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb strait. This attempt demonstrated the significance of this waterway as a strategic weapon in the Arab-Israeli conflict and it send signal of insecurity to Israel and other stakeholders.[86]

Neuberger, from this category, having explained that Muslim Eritrean separation from Christian Ethiopia had strong support in the Arab and Muslim world. He went on to say that the support was organized by erroneously proclaiming that; "All Islamic conferences

[82] Theodore S. Dagne 'Ethiopian Jews', Congressional Research Service Update, Nov. 30, 1990.
[83] ------, Africa Report, vol.20 No.6, Nov.-December. 1975, p.36.
[84] Erlich, op. cit., p.57.
[85] Dan Connel, Against All Odds; A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution, NJ., Red Sea Press, 1997, p.21.
[86] Furthermore, Egypt's control over both outlets of the Red Sea (the second being the Suez Canal, which was closed in 1967 and only resumed operation in 1975) gave her advantage over Israel and potentially against Saudi Arabia herself, which was after all a major littoral power and a constant user of the Rea Sea shipping lines for the export of her oil. Some of the states across the Red Sea, particularly South Yemen, have not been friendly; to make Ethiopia's position there relaxed. South Yemen was neither friendly to Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia.

passed resolutions in support of Eritrean Separatism … The Arab League passed similar resolutions, although they contradicted OAU principles."[87]

This distortion was not only limited to scholarly publications but international news-houses (media and print comparable) also were not immune from this syndrome. Pool put this syndrome as follows; "The lurid image of an embattled Christian state attacked by Muslims who were supported by Arab states, had been a frequent theme in Western reporting on Eritrea. Even with more information made available about the Eritrean struggle in the mid-and late-1970 journalists continued to write of 'Muslim secessionism' or 'Arab-backed Eritrean guerrilla." [88] The news item that appeared in Christian Science Monitor in 1968 represented the prototype of news reporting that were commonly cited to demonstrate the prevailing attitude of the Western media in the 1960s-1970s; "Ethiopia, the oldest principality in Christendom, is fighting a war against a dissident movement sponsored by the Arab world." [89]

Zartman was pragmatic when he underlined that the Eritrean question was slightly different in form to either the international 'irredentist' issues of the Ogaden, Djibouti, and Northern Kenya or from the other dimensions of national re-awakening among the Oromos, Tigreans, as well as others in Ethiopia. [90] Yet, he emphasized the struggle's reliance on Arab countries for logistical and political support. As he put it, the Eritrean Liberation Movements have benefited from Sudanese support and Somali ties, but at various times enjoyed assistance from Egypt, Saudi and Syria according to the Arab ideological constellation of the moment.[91] As the result Ethiopianist literature views the Eritrean struggle as an Arab conspiracy and hence, dependant on the aid of a range of Arab countries. This group, which looked at the Eritrean struggle as discretely linked to

[87] Benyamin Neuberger, p.114.
[88] Pool, op. cit., p. 47.
[89] *Christian Science Monitor, 6 August 1968.* Pool, op. cit., p. 47. Pateman, op. cit., p. 93.
[90] Zartman, 1978, p.78.
[91] Zartman, 1983, p.30.

'an Arab movement', denied the existence of a secular nationalism of the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM)[92] and Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)[93]

The second group, while links the Eritrean movements with the Arab world, it contends that the Eritrean question was a colonial issue. This perspective, which is relatively new, challenges the former and its argument revolved around, "colonial thesis," that views Eritrean armed struggle as an anti-colonial insurrection for self-determination. Roy Pateman who argued on self-reliance wrote that there was no need to adopt the thesis that Eritrean resistance was only possible because of Arab support.[94] Irrefutably, for the most part there was sympathy and general tendency on part of the Arab states to support Eritrean aspirations for independence.[95] However, among other things, as the motives for their Arab sympathy varied, there was no consensus among them. Nor was their support critical to the viability of the struggle, as it has never been substantial and persistent. Nevertheless, as the great powers have sided with Ethiopia and because of African fears, the Eritreans largely depended on themselves.[96] Moreover, for these same reasons the Eritreans had no significant backers and fought a bargain-basement war, largely with captured weapons. [97] The works of these writers prevailed, that in large part of the literature-Scholarly and ephemeral alike-it has become almost obligatory to analyze and speculate upon Eritrea's reliance upon a changing cast of Middle Eastern powers for training, arms and support, without which the Eritrean cause was reckoned doomed. [98]

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[92] Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) is quite often used to include all Eritrean nationalist factions, yet, it is the name of a specific political movement which predated the armed struggle. Locally known as *Haraka Tahrir Eritreat* in Arabic of *Mahber Shew'ate in Tigrinya*. Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) an outshoot of the ELF developed in a democratic and inclusive way, emerged dominant in late 1970s and finally fought a conventional war against the Ethiopian Army and won the war and it in power under its new name since Third Congress of the Front in 1994, People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

[93] Ruth, op. cit., p.15.

[94] Pateman, op. cit., p. 93.

[95] Romodan Mahamed Nur, the Secretary General of the EPLF (1977-1987), Interview with the author, 2003.

[96] Pool, op. cit., P.45.

[97] Geraldine Brooks, 'Post-war Promise Africa's Newest Nation Little Eritrea Emerges As an Oasis of Civility', The Wall street Journal, 31 May 1994.

[98] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, NJ, The Red Sea Press Inc., 1990, p.93.

Ethiopianist literature, resting on the acceptance of the Greater Ethiopia thesis, was highly influenced by this outlook. It constrained any analysis of opposition movements, which, like Eritrea's, had as their basis the rejection of the imposed unity of Greater Ethiopia. From this perspective, historic opposition to Ethiopians coercive unity was not denied but marginalized as a phenomenon of the internal politics of Ethiopia. With particular regard to Eritrea, the Greater Ethiopia thesis led to the dichotomy between the "unified" nationalism epitomized by the Pan-Ethiopian state and the fragmented nature of Eritrean opposition.[99]

The limitations on both categories are: both did not realize that there was important twist in the internal politics of the struggle and major developments on the Ethiopian side. As neither the struggle nor the Ethiopian state were without their drastic changes. One has to look before and after the birth of the EPLF in 1970 and before and after the 1974 military coup in Ethiopia respectively. These developments that did not often; get sufficient attention from the authors of both categories who continued to insist (make mention of) on Arab assistance, yet, neither supported with credible evidences nor put in a regional or international political contexts. In order one to understand the nature of true Arab support to Eritrea's independence one has to divide the time under discussion into these four phases. The only writer who made mention of this is Haggai Erlich, who asserted

> Since the Ethiopian revolution resulted in the beginning of an all-Arab consensus concerning the strategic importance of Red Sea, whose future role was dubbed that of an "Arab Lake." This had considerable implications for the Arab attitude toward Eritrean nationalism. Such a consensus had not existed before the 1974 revolution. Only when Ethiopia had been weakened by the revolution did the neighboring Arab countries adopted a posture of confrontation, and this happened even though Ethiopia had by now severed diplomatic relations with Israel.[100]

[99] Iyob, op. cit., p.12.
[100] Erlich, op. cit., p.56.

Now we turn to the third chapter that deals with two landmark historical episodes- British Military Administration (BMA) of Eritrea and the United Nations debates on its fate. The discussion on the former focuses on two complementary but markedly different tendencies of the occupying power. The administration's input to the growing grievances of the populace and its policy of opening venues for its expression. The two processes culminated in the development of a budding but unstable civil-society. This will be followed by a discussion on a parallel development- the United Nations General Assembly's debate on the future of Eritrea. It seeks to show the controversy that surrounded Eritrea's case and how and why was it awarded to Ethiopia. The main purpose of this section is, however, to specifically discuss the role of Arab member states of the United Nations organization on the issue.

Chapter Three

From British Military Administration to Federation

It was to become a permanent factor in Eritrean political history that the strategic interests of more powerful states, regardless of ideology, were decisive, whether in decisions concerning the 'disposition' of Eritrea or in decisions about whom to support in the Horn of Africa later in the mid-1970s.[101]

David Pool,
Eritrea: Africa's Longest War, 1980.

It would be unjust to compensate one who had suffered long by doing an even greater wrong to another.[102]

Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan,
Pakistani envoy to the United Nations Organization,1947.

3.1 British Military Administration

The Italians arrived on the Eritrean Red Sea coasts in 1885. Due to British support and Menelik's acquiescence, the Italians continued their encroachment to the hinterland. Italy, having consolidated its grip, declared "*Medri Bahri*" [103] on January 1, 1890 as the first Italian African colony by naming her Eritrea.

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[101] Pool, op. cit., P.27
[102] -------, 'Future of Former Italian Colonies', United Nations Bulletin (U.N.B) , October 15, 1949, p.443.
[103] *Mdri-Bahri* (literally meaning Land of the Sea) was the ancient name of present day Eritrea or what the

Italy declared war on Allied powers on 10 June 1940. The British who controlled the Anglo-Egyptian condominium Sudan marched towards Eritrea and Somalia with the help of Briton, Sudanese, Indian, and South African contingents. This was mainly for two reasons; to counter Axis powers' designs of controlling Egypt from Libya to close the Suez Canal and then push to the Middle East; and all the while avoid fighting in two fronts, the Italians from the southeast and the Germans from the north.

Italy not only lacked a determined army but it also mistook the silence of Eritreans (Eritrea's aspirations for independence) as a proof of their loyalty to Italy. The British who understood the desires of the Eritrean people, just one day after declaration of war by Italy, started flying over Asmara to throw pamphlets that promised granting of independence to Eritreans for their cooperation. Consequently, Eritrean Italian soldiers (*askaris*) started deserting the Italian colonial army in their hundreds or individually returned to their respective villages. This, among other things, helped the British to make a rapid advance across the western lowland plains of Eritrea till checked before the mountainous trains guarding Keren. William Plat, the British general in charge of the allied forces, who was not sure for how long his forces will be stationed there, made temporary arrangements for the Western lowlands of Eritrea.[104] This move gave the local people the impression that, primary British interest was expanding their Sudanese territorial ambitions not one of liberating Eritrea. With the arrival of reinforcements, however, the advance continued on 26 February hence, Keren fell in four days. After this battle "the first and only battle of the campaign, the British troops entered Asmara, the capital, on 1 April 1941, Massawa on 8 April and on 11 of the same month Asseb, [105] making British control of Eritrea complete.

Ethiopians used to call *Mereb-Mlash* (Beyond *Mereb*). *Mereb* is the name of a river that serves as a natural boundary between present day Ethiopia and Eritrea. Eritrea is a Greco-Roman name for the Red Sea which the Italians named their new colony at the official declaration of their control on 1 January 1890.

[104] On 5 February Gen. Plats decreed Eritrea's Barka region was under his control. He also specified that Eritrea was not a colony but as part of the Sudan and specifically as an extension of the Kassala province of the Sudan. As a result the administrator of the Kassala province Brigadier Kennedy Kook along with eight Briton military commanders and nine Sudanese police commissioners, formally accepted the responsibility of administering this area.

[105] G.K.N. Trevaskis, Eritrea: A Colony In Transition; 1941-1952, London, Oxford University Press, 1960,

Allied forces that were seen as liberators entered the capital and other cities of Eritrea to meet a reception that accounted to a hero welcome. Administration of Eritrea as 'Enemy occupied Territory' was then entrusted to the British military until the Allies could determine its fate. The next day Barka region, which previously was put with the Kassala province of the Sudan, was returned to Eritrea and Brig. Kook was assigned the Administrator General of Eritrea and took his office in Asmara.

The history of British occupation, under the guise of British Military Administration (1941-1952) merits particular attention. This period was an interim of rapid transition from Italian colonial rule to quasi-independence period of federation. Two contradictory processes that marked this period were set on motion; Eritrea's aspirations for self-determination and the interests of Imperial Ethiopia compounded by the strategic interests and designs of the major powers. Eritreans fought against colonialism and domination in all the times that proceeded this time. Yet, this time is sometimes considered to be the start of organized opposition. This is so because, the British period saw to the "Emergence of organized political groups with a rising political consciousness among the Eritrean masses."[106] Thus, laying the cornerstone of Eritrean nationalism and political consciousness as Trevaskis noted "It was a formative period, which is likely to leave its marks on Eritrea and its neighbors."[107]

3.1.1 War Economy

The unexpected immediate defeat of Italy did not give the British time to prepare for the administration of the territory, thus, they were ill prepared for their Eritrean responsibilities. Trevaskis[108] wrote,

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p.18.

[106] Basil Davidson Bereket Habte Selassie, and Lionel Cliffe (eds.), Behind the War in Eritrea, Russell Press Ltd., Nottingham, 1980, pp. 36

[107] Trevaskis, op. cit., P.30.

[108] Trevaskis's book as one writer ones remarked could be taken as the standard source for the British period and much else in Eritrea. As Trevaskis own claim in his book was second to the British Administration of Eritrea and remained in its service until the summer of 1950, two years before the end of occupation. He was favorably placed to observe the history of the occupation unfold itself. The book is mainly derived from his own 'observations, personal correspondence, and official documents

> It had been supposed that General Platt would be halted indefinitely before the heights of Keren; and consequently arrangement were only been made for the administration of the Barka and Gash-Setit lowlands.[109]

Supporting for their war efforts in Europe and in the region was the immediate interest of the British in Eritrea was. Eritrea's facilities and war-oriented industrial establishments were put to use in the service of the Allied forces. Similarly, as Tom Killion rightly noted "The British economic policy in Eritrea that differed in degree and scope from that of their predecessor's policy was dictated by war related projects."[110] Indeed, Allied powers were forced to move their logistics to Eritrea in the second half of 1941 as German forces were pushing Allied forces in the north. This gave the Allied forces four main advantages. First, Eritrea was far from German air strike. Second, it was not far from the Suez Canal. Third, it had a sound port facilities and infrastructure. Fourth the level of human resources was good enough for the war purposes.[111] With the control of Tobruk by German forces on June 21 1942 Eritrean ports were deemed the only safe ports in the whole Middle East. Therefore, this triggered the second war economic boom. Moreover, due to the German advance on the North the shipment of manufactured goods and consumer goods to European communities on the region virtually ceased. This further signified the strategic importance of Eritrea, where the Allied forces started to use Eritrea not only as a springboard for their war efforts (1942- 1944) on the North but also to produce consumer goods and other supplies. This initiated the second war economic boom which saw a limited revitalization of the Eritrean economy.

The first war boom (1923-1935) occurred due to Italy's preparations to invade Ethiopia. This development was driven by the Italian colonial ambitions- to create a larger Italian East Africa Empire, which Benito Mussolini dreamed would make Italy a first class

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and reports.'

[109] Trvaskis, op. cit., p.19.

[110] Tom Killion, 1996, p.121.

[111] Trvaskis, op. cit.,p.37.

colonial power.[112] Thus, what followed was a decade of intensive economic development that completely revolutionized Eritrea's mode of production, and laid a solid foundation for a vibrant capitalist economy to flourish. Indeed, Eritrea became one of the most advanced industrial economies in colonial Africa.[113] Consequently, Eritrean society was transformed from one that was overwhelmingly agrarian and traditional to one with significant modern industrial components. This was realized by massive state expenditure and war related projects and a massive influx of Italian immigrants. Moreover, following the invasion and occupation of Ethiopia (1935-1940) Eritrea was further transformed into a transport hub for the short-lived Italian East African Empire (*Africa Orientale Italian*).

Therefore, during the first phase of British occupation Eritrea's economy essentially was a war economy. The second war economic boom (1942-1945) was marked by an 'industrial boom', when over 300 factories were established in the space of only three years, subsequently, effecting the size of the multi-national Eritrean working class to swell.[114] Therefore, Eritrea's economy was thus, an economy subsidized by Anglo-American war time policies, and mainly built and manned by the 40,000 Italians who remained in the colony.[115] The United States abandoning its isolationist policy was giving Britain logistical help by the Lend-Lease Act. As Britain's air force casualty was enormous, it formally requested the United States to help maintain its air fleet. A maintenance center was established in Eritrea to which the US agreed to in a secret agreement struck on 19 November 1941 at Pentagon. A place called 'Gurae', found at the outskirts of 'Dekemhare' was groomed for this project. The plan which was code named Project 19 was relegated to a Dallas based Johnson Derik and Piper Inc. Immediately 120 American Engineers were summoned, and 20 doctors, 24 nurses, dentists, cooks accompanied them, baker including priests and barbers.[116] Gurae became such a big

[112] "Ethiopia Under Mussolini Fascism and Colonial Experience," Alberto Sbacchi, Great Britain, Zed Books Ltd., p.45.
[113] "Biopolitics, Militarism, and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century," David O'Kane, Tricia Hepner, Berghahn Books, 2011, p.xviii.
[114] Association of Eritrean Students in North America and Association of Eritrean Women in North America, In Defense of the Eritrean Revolution,, New York, Glad Day Press February 1978, p.44.
[115] Killion , op. cit., p.1.
[116] J.R. Rasmuson, A history of Kagnew Station and American Forces in Eritrea, Asmara, 1973, p.22.

maintenance and air craft assembling center where by 1 July 1942, 969 Americans including 58 military personals, 3434 Italians 5010 Eritreans and 10 others were employed.[117] This economic boom was short lived. Because, as soon as the war on the north ended so did the strategic importance of Eritrea. In 1944, however, the British and American military installations began to close down, and by 1946, the regional markets for Eritrean products were being lost to renewed competition from overseas. Moreover, postwar economic recession was exacerbated by the British Military Administration's dismantling and sale of most of Eritrea's military installations and some of its transport infrastructure in an attempt to pay off part of Great Britain's huge war debts.[118]

The ill preparedness of the British left the Italian civil servants in place and Italian civil administration, essentially, continued. The only department where urgent measures were taken to weaken Italian control was the police. Hence, the two Italian organizations the Royalist *carabinieri* and strongly Fascist *Polizia Africana Italiana*- scarcely enjoyed British confidence as instruments of security,[119]were disbanded. As aforementioned, as the Allied forces were losing the war in North Africa, the Italian settlers (around 70,000) were hoping that the Italians would come back to Eritrea, started actively agitating against the British. The British who quickly noticed this Italian mood started sort of appeasing Italian expatriates. The administration not only took measures to improve the living condition of the expatriates, it even gave financial hand outs to unemployed Italians. The British in order to avoid the onus of administering the territory on same year named Eritrea as Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA). Thus no British admin was established. Rather than training or preparing the natives for independence the British though disbanded the notorious *Karabinere* Italian African Police, it reorganized a police force which included very few of the natives. Worse it reorganized the Italian bureaucrats as administrators of provincial and local administrators. To the dismay of Eritreans the notorious, apartheid like, color Bar policy was not nullified till much later. Thus for the Eritreans life went from bad to worse. The British not only broke their

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118 "Historical Dictionary of Eritrea," Dan Connell, Tom Killion, Scarecrow Press, 2010, p. 136.
119 Trvaskis, op. cit., p.21.

promise of granting Eritreans their independence, insult to injury, reinstated the Italian administration, which repressed the people for so long, has been restored. The restored Italian administration initiated another wave of retaliation on the Eritrean people, for their allegiance to the British, at the time of war that route Italian forces from Eritrea.

3.2. Ethiopia-Eritrea Federation; A United Nations Enforced Marriage by Proxy

3.2.1. Introduction

In Crimea (Yalta) Conference, it was agreed that the five powers, that would later assume permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, should consult each other prior to the United Nations' conference on the question of territorial trusteeship. General understanding was established that 'territorial trusteeship' only apply to "existing mandates of the League of Nations… territories detached from the enemy … any other territory, which might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship." [120] Hence, no discussions of actual territories were to be contemplated at the United Nations meeting or in its preliminary consultations prior their collective decision pertaining, which territories qualified for 'trusteeship territory'.[121]

Eritrea, where the British Military Administration had assumed the role of a care-taker government over a 'former enemy occupied territory', automatically qualified for 'trusteeship territory'. This was complemented by Italy's formal renouncement of its former colonial holdings in Africa, (Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and Libya) in the 1947 Conference where the issue was first raised. The future of these ex-Italian colonies was to be jointly decided by France, the United Kingdom, the United States and USSR. As enshrined in Article 23 of the Treaty of Paris, the final disposal of these 'trusteeship territories' should be within one year after the enactment of the Treaty. [122] If this was not

[120] The Crimea (Yalta) Conference Feb. 4 to 11of ----the heads of the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941-49, Department of State, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1950.

[121] Loc cit.

[122] ------, 'Future of Former Italian Colonies', U.N.B., October 15, 1949, p.440.

accomplished within a year, Article XI, paragraph 3 of the Peace Treaty empowered the United Nations stipulating,

> If with respect to any of these territories the Four Powers are unable to agree upon their disposal within one year from the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace with Italy, the matter shall be referred to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation and the Four Powers agree to accept the recommendation and to take appropriate measures for giving effect to it. [123]

These powers dispatched what is known as 'The Four Power Inquiry Commission' to Eritrea, to gather firsthand information. Nevertheless, despite the noble *raison deter*, the commission beleaguered by power politics of its benefactors failed in its September 1948 report to agree on a future course for Eritrea. The conflicting interests of the Four Powers and their uncompromising stances ruled out the possibility for a common ground. Indeed, later on in one of the United Nations General Assembly's deliberations the Soviet Union's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mr. Amazasp Arutiunian, lamented that the other three (U.S., France and Great Britain):

> Had done everything to remove the question from the Council of Foreign Ministers, which had been found inconvenient, in order to utilize their majority in the General Assembly and secure a solution to their liking.[124]

3.2.2. Eritrea and the U.N. General Assembly

As the Four Powers could not reach an acceptable solution the Eritrean issue was referred to the United Nations on September 15, 1948, which set an important milestone in annals of the United Nations. Duncan Cumming, one of the first to acknowledge this wrote in the Middle East Journal as early as 1953, "On no other occasion did the Four Powers renounce so clearly their privilege to settle a problem which stemmed from the allied

[123] Heinrich Scholler, 'The Ethiopian federation of 1952: an obsolete model or a guide to the future?', in Peter Woodward and Murry Forsyth (eds.) , Conflict And Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its Alternatives, Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1994, p. 13.
[124] U.N.B. op. cit., p.445.

victory in favor of a settlement through the General Assembly."[125] Notwithstanding, this largely unacknowledged significance of this decision to the United Nations, the prospects for Eritrea's problem to find a lasting solution, in a way that accommodated the genuine aspirations of Eritreans, was as remote as before. When the Eritrean case was taken up in the UNGA, it was subjected to the intricacies of the UNGA's budding multilateral diplomacy. Indeed, it also became a highly ideologically charged issue that at least added a single brick in putting up the 'Iron Curtain'. Therefore, the extent of active interests that member states displayed, made it less easy for the General Assembly to resolve, which had already been impaired by internal divisions along ideological lines.

The UNGA's deliberations were a replica to that of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers. The only difference being, former was the repetition of the older differences of the latter in a larger setting of the former. Italy had, for instance, requested that Eritrea be returned to her as a colony or as a trusteeship. This bid was supported initially by the Soviet Union, which anticipated a communist victory at the Italian polls. However, in a dramatic change of stance; in September 1949 the Soviet Union started advocating for complete independence for Eritrea following the Italian government decision to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) early that year.[126] Egypt, in a memorandum submitted to the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, too laid claims on Eritrea on historical and economic grounds. Egypt hoped to maximize her interest in the region by annexing Eritrea to the Sudan. Egypt's historical claim was that "the African coast of the Red Sea was markedly Arab in character."[127] Egypt's ambition to put Sudan, which was then Anglo-Egyptian condominium, under her complete control after British withdrawal motivated her to speak in support of the economic importance of Eritrea to the Sudan. The memorandum stated that economically and commercially "Massawa was indispensable to the Sudan", which it declared were the "natural outlet for Kordofan and

[125] Duncan Cameron Cumming, 'The Disposal of Eritrea', Middle East Journal, Vol.7, No.1, Winter 1953, p.19.

[126] Sheth, op. cit., p.55.
[127] Ibid., p. 56.

Darfur [of Sudan].[128] Egypt's stance was, of course, favored by the British Government that co-administered Sudan with Egypt. This British stand was later expressed by the Bevin-Sforza Partition Plan[129], which was co-authored by the then British Foreign Minister; Mr. Bevin and his Italian counterpart Count Carlo Sforza.

When the United Nations Committee's general debate opened Mr. Hector McNeil, the then British Minister responsible for the United Nations, who happened to be the first speaker, tabled Bevin's partition proposal. He then said "If the majority of the Assembly should consider such a solution inappropriate, or if a better solution were proposed, his delegation would raise no objection."[130] It was not without reason that Mr. McNeil in conclusion reminded "no attempt would be made to make political propaganda of the situation the territories concerned would not be used as the instruments of some less worthy purpose than that of carrying out the task entrusted to the Committee."[131] The United States reaffirmed the partition plan. In the judgment of the United States; the populations of the two regions were also linked by common cultural, social and economic ties.[132]

The proposal aroused indignant reaction among the Eritrean people, spearheaded by Eritrean Independence Block. The then Italian Foreign Minister, stunned by the stark Eritrean opposition Speaking by incitation before the First Committee on October 1, testified "The Eritreans had proved conscious of their maturity and determined to assert it…The peaceful coexistence in Eritrea of various religions provides one more argument for the unity and independence of the country."[133] He then urged the granting of immediate independence for Eritrea. The USSR representative who called the plan "Bevin-Sforza understanding" blamed the United Kingdom, with the approval of the

[128] Okbazghi Yohannes, Eritrea: A Pawn in World Politics, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991, P.76
[129] division of Eritrea, with the Christian areas and the coast from Massawa southward going to Ethiopia and the northwest area going to the Sudan.
[130] U.N.B., op. cit., p.441.
[131] Ibid., p.442.
[132] Loc. Cit.
[133] Ibid., p.444.

United States, has taken the path of circumventing the United Nations in reaching a separate understanding with Italy.[134] Italy asserted the necessity of granting independence to Eritrea when the proposal, which was entirely satisfactory to neither party, was rejected.

Ethiopia in her part with relatively stronger case than Italy and Egypt, as discussed in chapter two, made her bid for Eritrea on the basis of three major arguments. One, the historical right of Ethiopia over Eritrea as she stated in an official note to Britain on 18 April 1942. Second, Ethiopia's persistent need for access to the sea as was communicated through a memorandum to the British Prime Minister at the Cairo Conference in February 1945. This memo was pathetic in that its reasoning was based on redress that "the merger of Eritrea would compensate Ethiopia for the injustice inflicted upon it by Fascist Italian rule."[135] This argument, as weak as it might had been, did not fall on deaf ear, however. At one point of the long drawn discussions of the UNGA both the United Kingdom and the United States had expressed keen disappointment over the failure to reach a settlement on Eritrea, and particularly over the inability to find a formula admitting their moral indebtedness to Ethiopia- "a small country whose history and sufferings alike placed a special obligation on them." The United Kingdom could not pretend that the Assembly had discharged its full moral obligation to Ethiopia "the first and foremost victim of fascist attacks."[136] The United Kingdom looked more concerned with this issue ashamed by her previous recognition of Italy's occupation of Ethiopia in 1936. The third is the economic non viability of independent Eritrea. Against the harsh reality of Eritrea's vibrant economic development of the time that testified otherwise, this reasoning gave the impression to the West; economically unviable Eritrea would only be the breeding ground for regional trouble, which in the political jargon of the times, a heaven given opportunity for communist infiltration. This was complemented by Ethiopia's pro-West, specifically pro-America, stand in the increasing East-West

[134] Ibid.,p.446.
[135] V. S. Sheth, 'Eritrean Struggle for Independence; Internal and External Dimensions', Journal of International Studies, Vol. 24 No.1, January-March, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1987,P.55.
[136] Ibid., p.637.

confrontation, which was later signified by Ethiopia's participation in the Korean War[137] and coincided with America's need for communications facilities in Eritrea. It should be noted that the United Kingdom had already given its expressed support to Ethiopia's claims on Eritrea at the first discussion of the Council of Foreign Ministers in October 1946. At that time, Mr. Bevin not only had made it known to the delegates, his government's intentions not to remain in Eritrea; but also in a futile attempt to persuade the Council to favor Ethiopia's claims; he said;

> …. we believe that when the council of foreign Ministers come to examine the problem they can hardly fail to be impressed by Ethiopia's claim to incorporate in her territory at any rate a large part of Eritrea, which is inhabited by people who are in every way akin to the inhabitants of Northern Ethiopia herself. [138]

Third, is the economic non-viability of independent Eritrea. Against Eritrea's vibrant economic development of the time, that testified otherwise, this reasoning gave the impression to the West that an economically unviable Eritrea would only be a breeding ground for regional trouble, which in the political jargon of the time, a heaven given opportunity for communist infiltration. This was complemented by Ethiopia's pro-West, specifically pro-America, gestures in the increasing East-West confrontation, which was late symbolized by Ethiopia's participation in the Korean War, [139]and coincided with America's need for communications facilities in Eritrea. For apparent reasons this was opposed by the USSR assisted by Dr. Vladimir Clementis, of Czechoslovakia who accused the UK, US and France for intending to "set up military and strategic bases for

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[137] A letter from the Under Secretary of State (Smith) addressed to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), Secret 775.5 MSP/4-653, Washington April 6, 1953. Documented in US Foreign Relations, 1952-1954, Vol. XI, Pp.444-445. The letter confirmed that Ethiopia had maintained in Korea for nearly two years a contingent of about 1200 troops…. The third battalion of Ethiopian troops left for Korea in March, 1953. This was one of the stated reasons that Smith included to justifying Ethiopia's legibility of US grant aid. He testified that By act as well as by word the Ethiopians have proved that they are on "our side" and are strong supporters of collective security. The presence in Korea of colored troops from an independent African country is of great value to us in the propaganda war as well as in the Korean war. On this basis alone, Ethiopia's request for arms assistance deserves sympathetic consideration.

[138] Cumming, op. cit., p.20.

[139] Loc cit.

their aggressive plans" and "the usual motives of expansionist policy" respectively. [140] The later he opined "Perhaps rejection of, and the consequent delay in reaching a solution were behind these attitudes." [141] Endorsing this view, the USSR representative also vented his displeasure by remarking that "The deadlock on Eritrea was also due to the appetite of the various claimants, some of whom wanted partition and others Italian rule. Therefore, it became clear from the start that the East and its associates, who supported Eritrea's independence, were outnumbered by the US-led bloc. The USSR representative was reported to have said "… the countries, which had supported the true desires of the people of Eritrea- such as the Soviet Union-, had been left out of the commission of investigation to be sent to the territory." [142] The initial postponements of the Assembly's decisions on Eritrea not only testify to the number and contrast of differences, but also their balance to one another, perhaps stalemate.

3.2.3. Views of Arab UN Member States on the disposal of Eritrea

At the time of the debate Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria were members since 1945, thus voiced their stand on the issue. Yemen, which had been member since 30 September, 1947, whose recorded stand on Eritrea's cause could not be found, is not included in this discussion. Initially most of these Arab states, seeing Eritrea and its large Muslim population as an extension of the Arab world, sought the establishment of an independent state. However, as the debates heated up and became more complicated, these states started to soften their stand, except some half-hearted endorsement for independence. For these states, as will follow in the discussions hereunder, either were more preoccupied with Libyan and Somali questions than they did on Eritrea's or called for Eritrea's independence with more emphasis to Ethiopia's need for access to the sea.

The Middle Eastern countries were all in favor of immediate independence for Libya. Egypt which was represented by Kamel Abdul Rahim Bey welcomed the tendency shown to grant full independence for Libya and favored the maximum degree of self-

[140] U.N.B., op. cit., 15 October, 1949, p.445.
[141] Ibid, pp.446-7.
[142] Ibid., p.641.

government and independence at the earliest possible time for Somalia. But for Eritrea, Egypt supported any solution taking into consideration the wishes of the inhabitants, as well as *the just claims of Ethiopia* [emphasis added].[143] The representative of Turkey, Adnan Kural, who welcomed what he called "considerable evolution" also had identical opinion to Egypt's regarding Eritrea.[144] The Iraqi representative, Dr. Fadhel Jamali, endorsing Turkey's views, who urged destinies of the territories should not be linked or become the subject of bargaining, was only concerned with Libya he did not mention Eritrea or Somaliland.[145] Fayez El-Khouri Bey, stating that it was Syria's national and humanitarian duty to support the "equitable and liberal" proposals of the USSR, supported Eritrea's right for independence.[146] Dr. Charles Malik, of Lebanon, after having made clear that above all else the interests and wishes of the inhabitants be considered, he also reminded his audience that the proposals must also be realistic. Hence, Lebanon favored *Eritrea's independence as an undivided unity*; with due allowance to Ethiopia's need for a sea outlet. [147]

The strongest endorsement for Eritrea's independence came from Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Delegation poignantly drew attention to the fact that disagreements among the big powers should not govern the proceedings of the committee. It was also strongly opposed to the condition of Italy's over population or her heritage of civilization and culture was irrelevant to the problem in question. The Saudi delegation argued that the only road to solving the Eritrean problem was to grant independence and, if that were not feasible, to arrange trusteeship. According to the Saudi position, the guiding principle in considering the Eritrean case were; 1. Preservation of Eritrean unity…primacy of the interest of Eritreans…establishment of trusteeship only to aid the Eritrean in their progress toward independence and the selection of an administering authority in accordance with the desires of the people.[148]

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[143] Ibid, p.447.
[144] Ibid, p.448.
[145] Loc. Cit.
[146] Loc. Cit.
[147] U.N.B., Future of Former Italian Colonies, 15 October, 1949, p.449.
[148] Yohannes, op. cit., P.117.

The initial plan for Eritrean independence was laid aside in favor of a federation plan presented by Ethiopia. Contrary to the usual UN procedure, the proposal was not put to a popular referendum before the General Assembly vote in 1950, approving the scheme.[149] After many months of discussion the General Assembly reached on November 21, what was described by many representatives as the most gratifying achievement of any session of the General Assembly. The decision created two new sovereign states in Africa-Libya and Somalia, which would become independent by 1952 and by 1960 respectively. With regard to Eritrea the Assembly decided to establish a commission of investigation and dispatched to Eritrea, "in order to ascertain more fully the wishes of the people and best means of promoting their welfare". This final solution was adopted by 48 votes in favor, with Ethiopia casting the sole negative vote. Nine member states abstained: Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, France, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, the USSR, and Yugoslavia.[150] On the completion of its general debate on November 21, the Assembly commenced a section-by-section voting on the resolution. Section "C", dealing with Eritrea, was then approved by 47 votes in favor, five against, and six abstentions (Ethiopia, Greece, Liberia, Philippines, Sweden, and Yugoslavia.)[151] Three of these were voted as a package and were then adopted by 48 to 1 with 6 abstentions.

Stressing Egypt's deep concern about the future of Eritrea and Somaliland, Mr. Tahim said that as regards Eritrea the resolution was not the ideal solution for realizing the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants and the aspirations of the valiant Eritrean people. But it was a good beginning, which he hoped would culminate in a good end. A final solution must take into consideration the peoples' ethnic and religious affinities, as well as the just claims of Egypt's neighbor, Ethiopia.[152] In subscription to the Saudi position, Iraq charged that the strategic interest of the big powers were the only problems on the way to finding an acceptable solution to the Eritrean question. The delegate added that

[149] Shepherd, jr. op. cit., p. 80.
[150] U.N.B. op. cit., December 1, 1949, p.636
[151] Ibid., p.642.
[152] Ibid., p.642.

approaches of the big powers were in flagrant contradiction of the principle of self-determination and trusteeship system. In regard to the claims of Ethiopia, he argued that Ethiopia could get an access to the sea 'provided that such a solution did not contravene the wishes of the Eritrean people and their right to self-determination. [153] Iraq introduced a draft resolution reflecting positions pursuant to the principle of the charter of the United Nations and the concept of self-determination. Many delegates started to express their views in support of the Indian-Iraqi drafts. Iraq draft recommended that the General Assembly dispatch a five-member commission to Eritrea to ascertain the real wishes of the people as to their future political status and to report to the fourth regular General Assembly session.[154] Indian proposals, Sir B.N. Rau considered that it would be useful if the UN commission for Libya could also visit Eritrea and collect information concerning the partition of the territory. If the majority of the population favored partition, the commission should make recommendations concerning the exact position of the boundary line, the allocation of each part of the territory and minority safeguards. If the commission found the population did not desire partition, it should state whether, in its opinion, Eritrea was ready for self-government.[155]

Finally Italy capitulated to the Anglo-American circle and gave written endorsement of the federation formula. Fourteen of the eighteen Latin American countries then defected *en masse*, abandoning their longstanding anti-Ethiopian position. The Arabs, too, led by Egypt which was a claimant to Eritrea, supported the American formula. Hence, the United States joined with seven Latin American states, Burma, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Liberia and turkey sponsored what was called, "middle-the-Road Formula",[156] which was eventually adopted as the UNGA's Resolution 390 (A) (V) on December 2, 1950, by a vote of forty-seven to ten with four abstentions. This resolution specified that; "recommended that; Eritrea shall constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown…taking into consideration: 'The wishes

[153] Yohannes , op. cit., p. P.117.
[154] Ibid.,p.124.
[155] U.N.B. op. cit., October 15, 1949, p.443.
[156] "Rumblings Along the red Sea: The Eritrean Question," John Franklin Campbell, Foreign Affairs, vol. 48, no. 4, New York, April 1970, p.57.

and welfare of the inhabitants of Eritrea…the interest of peace and security in East Africa…the rights and claims of Ethiopia…including in particular Ethiopia's legitimate need for access to the sea."[157] The UNGA also adopted a resolution affirming the commission's plan, with the provision that Britain, the administering power, should facilitate the UN efforts and depart from the colony no later than September 15, 1952.

One of the ironies of the time was that Syria and Iraq, which consistently anti-imperialist at least in rhetoric, and would later be closely associated with Eritrea's armed resistance since from mid-1960, endorsed the federal formula. On the Other hand, Israel, still a new state, opposed the formula and supported Eritrean independence. Yet, Israel was late to be one of the foremost suppliers of arms to Ethiopia, and was charged with the task of training the most notorious counterinsurgency elite troops to be used against the Eritrean nationalists.[158] Reviewing the course taken by the Assembly Mr. Arutiunian recalled that several delegations, including the Arab and a number of Asiatic Member states had retreated from their original positions, and so had made it possible for a majority of the Political Committee to adopt the resolution now before the Assembly. Those Member states had originally taken a position close to that of the Soviet Union, calling for the immediate independence of Libya, and for brief trusteeship administration by the United Nations in Eritrea and Somaliland. After "blackmailing" from their original positions those delegations had described the present proposals as "a compromise," even as "a just compromise."[159]

US Backing for Haile Selassie, who provided strategic requirements in Eritrea, were the decisive factor.[160] A secret document of Department of State, National Policy Paper on Ethiopia and Horn of Africa, approved November10, 1964 reveals, "Ethiopia is the keystone of American policy in the Horn". The document further states that the importance of this region to America stems primarily from three factors: 1- the strategic

[157] Ayele, in Aluko, Hodder and Stoughton (eds.), op. cit., P.57.
[158] Yohannes , op. cit., Pp. 173-174.
[159] U.N.B. December 1, 1949, Future of Former Italian Colonies, p.636
[160] Shepherd, jr., op. cit., p. 80.

location of the area in relation to the Red Sea and as a bridge between Arab Black Africa: 2- the location in northern Ethiopia of major US communications facility- Kagnew station, and 3- the importance of Ethiopia…as a moderating and generally pro-western influence in African and international councils.[161] Therefore, the Eritreans, who have had as good a case for independence as most African states, have been bound to Ethiopia by post war rivalry. [162] The UN decision took cognizance of 'Ethiopia's special interest' in Eritrea, compromised the interests of Eritrean people.[163] There was no doubt that this was one of the most important and tangible returns of the Emperor's foreign policy efforts of the late 1940's.[164] Nevertheless, the so-called 'compromise' solution of the United Nations failed to resolve the enigma of Eritrea's problem, and bring peace in East Africa as it promised.

At last, the role played by the United State was at the center of all of this. The United States officials had occasionally made it clear these roles at the United Nations debates and federation period. As a Dispatch from US Consul in Asmara Eritrea says it all it is worth quoting in full.

> To express my thesis in simplest terms I believe that our policy throughout the protracted settlement of the Eritrean problem has been in fact characterized by a desire to obtain through our great influence in international circles the best possible terms for Ethiopia. I believe that the time has now come to readjust the emphasis on our policy to obtaining the best possible terms for ourselves and of gaining the maximum advantage for ourselves … That our policy rightly included action by the rule-of-thumb that the settlement must be to Ethiopia's advantage is not questioned. [165]

[161] National Policy Paper on Ethiopia, approved November10, 1964 (secret). Part one revised March 5, 1965. (Department of State app. C. special problem areas sec. 4, The Horn of Africa. 1968 Secret. LBJ Library DDRS # 1287, 1985.
[162] Loc cit.
[163] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.34
[164] Loc cit.
[165] Asmara dispatch 189 June 13 of US Embassy in Eritrea, Not printed, was 'Views on American Policy with respect to Eritrea and Ethiopia. P. 425.

The British administration held elections on March 16, 1952, for a Representative Assembly of sixty-eight members. This body, made up equally of Christians and Muslims, accepted the draft constitution advanced by the UN commissioner on July 10. The constitution was ratified by the emperor on September 11, and the Representative Assembly, by prearrangement, was transformed into the Eritrean Assembly three days before the federation was proclaimed. Thus, as per the United Nations decision, Eritrea's federation with Ethiopia took effect on September 11, 1952. From this time on it was clear both to the United States and Ethiopia that the Eritreans would not give into this federal arrangement. Thus, they had to make a formal military pact to try to hold the rising discontent. In so doing the US-Ethiopia Security Pact was signed in 1953 and US arms started to flow in the guise of Ethiopia's internal security. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs David Newsom assured a US Senate Foreign Relations Sub-committee in June 1970;

> We have committed ourselves to equip and train the Ethiopians for forces to be used for internal security. At the same time it has been our policy for many years to seek to avoid involvement in the internal security problems of Ethiopia.[166]

Local politics, priorities and perceptions provided explanations for the process and causation of intervention, needless to say that these interventions operated in local settings. From this departure, the following chapter has taken up the origins and courses of the armed resistance in an attempt to closely relate the externalities to local circumstances throughout.

[166] "American Military aid to Ethiopia and Eritrean Insurgency," Robert A. Diamond and David Fouquet, Africa Today, Vol. 19, No.1, Winter 1972, p. 39.

Chapter Four

An Overview of the Eritrean Revolution

> It is for Ethiopia to make its choices. The temptation to subject Eritrea firmly under its own control will always be great. Should it try to do so, it will risk Eritrean discontent and eventual revolt, which, with foreign sympathy and support might disrupt both Eritrea and Ethiopia itself.
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> G. K. N. Trevaskis, Eritrea: A Colony in Transition, 1960. [167]

4.1. Introduction;
The Precursor of the Armed Struggle (1941-1958)

Eritrea's political struggle in 1940s and 1950s, which is often taken as the cornerstone of Eritrea's defiant nationalism, bridged the pervious, sporadic and unorganized resistance against consecutive invading forces and the armed insurgence, the highest form of the struggle for national emancipation. If it were not for spatial reasons, an in-depth discussion this period is indispensable to the proper understanding to its

[167] Trevaskis, Loc cit. , pp.130-131.

political complexities and lasting legacies. However, a very brief account follows, hereunder by way of introduction to the discussion of the main topic.

The British enlisted the support of Eritreans against the Fascists even before World War II. They pledged to push for Eritrean self-determination if the Eritreans would turn against their colonial masters. [168] Eritreans out of resentment of the fascist policies of Italian colonialism conceived British campaigns against Italian forces as noble and the Britons as 'liberators'. Thus, though Eritreans lacked the necessary military organization and equipments to confront the Italian colonial regiments, as noted above they accelerated for its downfall. Expectedly, emphasizing their pro-Allied efforts during the war the Eritreans had pinned their hopes for freedom and national independence. Sadly, it was not long before Eritreans realized that the British would not honor their wartime pledges. This, among other things, would have had far reaching implications in the political culture and national aspirations of the Eritrean society. The two profound ones being; first, it occurred to them that their inspirations for independence could only be realized through their own struggle. Second, the Eritrean Moslems and Christians, though they had no much record of religious enmity, both felt were equally victims of British betrayal, thus cemented their aspirations for a unified and independent Eritrea. Hence, it was out of this crude desire of national survival that political agitation began to take more organized and militant forms.

In October 1946, the British allowed the emergence of indigenous political groupings, which was strictly forbidden during the Fascist Italian rule and "encouraged the institutionalization of political activities."[169] This was, of course, complemented by freedom of speech and association. Initially the publications and broadcasts were meant for follow-up on the progress of the war in Europe and related issues. It however, took a life of its own and developed into a vibrant press and information services. Undeniably, it

[168] Edmond J. Keller, Revolutionary Ethiopia; From Empire to People's Republic, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988, p.151.

[169] Brigadier J. M. Benoy's public address to the assembly of chiefs and representatives of the people published in the *Nai Ertra Semunawi Gazeta* (Eritrean Weekly Gazet), no 217, October 24, 1946. In Ruth Iyob, p.68.

had made invaluable contributions to the political education and enculturation of the Eritrean polity. This could be ascertained from the Eritrean interest in politics, perhaps in rather a crude form, spread throughout the country and not confined to the urban intelligentsia.[170] Thus, these two parallel developments spawned prominent political activists and commentators, some of whom would be destined to play important roles in the Eritrean national political struggle. [171] There was a leadership gap in the true meaning of the word. Till that time there were no such nationally recognized leaders or they had been devoid of the public space to present themselves to the public. Besides, the Italians has hanged most public figures who resisted or potential dissidents, who would have naturally led the struggle for independence.

Weeks after the British Military Administration (BMA) was set up, however, Eritreans promoted by their yearning for freedom and independence had established informal and loose underground political activism. In no time, Eritreans organized themselves into various political as the BMA permitted freedom of association. By the end of 1945, the political tendencies crystallized as political 'parties' and the principal formations were Eritrean Independence Party (EIP) led by Weldab Weldemariam, Muslim League *(Rabita Al-Islamia)* led by Ibrahim Sultan Ali, and Unionist Party by Tedla Bairu.[172] Despite the factional politics that ensued, no bout that the formation of these different political groups had the effect of clarifying the issues surrounding the status and future of Eritrea and opposed Ethiopia's designs. In fact, Ethiopia's intervention and calculated exploitation of their grievances in 1942[173] partly helped proliferation of many more political parties opposed to it. Eritrean disgust to Italian colonial rule and its humiliating 'Color Bar' laws, akin to Apartheid, the possible return of Italian rule as a trustee, and the prospect of partition between Ethiopia and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, were among the notable reasons

[170] Michael and Trish Johnson, Review of African Political Economy, Eritrea: The National Question and the Logic for Protracted Struggle, March 1996 No.67 Briefings, p.186. Duncan Cameron Cumming, The Disposal of Eritrea, Middle East Journal, Vol.7 No.1 Winter 1953.
[171] Bereket Habte Selassie, 'From British Rule to Federation and Annexation', in Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe and Bereket Habte Selassie (ed), Behind the War in Eritrea, Nottingham, Spokesman Publishers, 1980, P.35.
[172] Ibid., P.36.
[173] Trvaskis, op. cit., p.60.

for Eritrean political struggle to take a unified stand. Moreover, British support for partition and the continued Italian presence in the territory caused anxiety and suspicion regarding European collusion at the expense of the inhabitants. This was compounded by neighboring states which claimed Eritrea on the basis of pre-colonial linkages.[174]

Ethiopia that has an interest at stake in Eritrea was alarmed with the course of political developments in Eritrea. Thus, if they were not to lose their interest by default, the Ethiopians set out to play a divisive role within the budding Eritrean civic society. To this end they identified their potential instruments of subversion. One of which was the Coptic Church, not only enjoys a traditional authoritative influence amongst the Christian highlanders but had its own 'substantial material interest in the matter' that concurred with Ethiopia's call for union.[175] It was not a surprise then that the Church, in 1949 before the arrival of the UN Commission, announced publicly in the newspapers that those who supported independence would not be baptized, married, or buried and would not be given communion or absolution.[176] The effect of such intimidation on 'the Christian segment of the traditionally religious society was considerable'.[177] The second readymade subversive instrument came from the traditional landed social elites who sought to regain their lost property and social stature. These were joined by young Eritreans who had acquired some education and were forced by unemployment and saw little prospect of advancement in competition with Italian officials, crossed the frontier into Ethiopia where he became an ardent advocate of the union of Eritrean with Ethiopia.[178] These people established a political party called the Unionist Party, which

[174] Iyob, op. cit., p.63.
[175] The Italian colonial regime had disposed of extensive favorable agricultural land the Church of these estates, converted tem into Crown land, and then leased them to many of the land-hungry Plateau villages and a few Italian settlers. The British took over Eritrea, had rejected all of the Church's petitions for the return of the land. Only union with Ethiopia and the favor of its traditional protector, the Emperor of Ethiopia, could now restore its property to the Church. Also the Bishop of the Tigrai (and Eritrea), who the Italians had replaced had every reason to be zealous in the Ethiopian cause if he were to regain his position. See. G.K.N. Trevaskis, Eritrea: A Colony In Transition; 1941-1952, London, Oxford University Press, 1960, pp.59-60.
[176] Trvaskis, op. cit., p.96.
[177] Eritrea Africa's Longest War: David Pool Anti-slavery Society Human Rights Series Report No.3-1980, London P.23
[178] Cumming, op. cit.,

was funded by Ethiopia whose leaders, faulted the political game of the time, were accepting direct orders from Addis Ababa. The composition, size, and goals of this party were captured by a British intelligence report stated that 'it becomes increasingly clear that the real irredentism is being propagated and fostered by a minority of ecclesiasts, bureaucrats and agents and remains essentially a minority movement.[179] Later, after the entering into effect of the federation, the emperor's systematic and subtle destruction of Eritrea's economic autonomous status was accompanied with ruinous economic policies that "killed Eritrea's dynamism,"[180] by "forcing some Eritrean industries to close down or to move their operation to Addis Ababa."[181] The motive behind this policy was to disrupt Eritrea's economy to prove to the world that 'an independent Eritrea was economically unviable and by creating illusive economic and unemployment crisis, and to warn the West that it would be lost to the East if given independence.

As noted above Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia on December 2, 1950 after a "long and messy decolonization process". [182] For all their sturdy tenure Eritrea and Ethiopia remained uneasy partners during the federation period (1952-1962). The ending of the uneasy short-lived Eritrean-Ethiopian federation, could be attributed to the "incompatibility of Ethiopia's absolutist monarchy and the nascent pluralist system in Eritrea." Perhaps more significantly, however, Ethiopia's need for sea access provided a more possible reason. In the first place, the Federation was a smokescreen for Ethiopia's outright claim over Eritrea was opposed in the United Nations, then the Federation was just a smock screen for the ultimate goal of annexing Eritrea. To give it legitimacy abroad and in order to win internal legitimacy the Emperor having undermined the autonomous status of Eritrea from day one of the federation, annexed it as the fourteenth province of Ethiopia. On November 14, 1962 Eritrean Assembly was forced to vote for annexation under heavy army encirclement with tanks and ammunition declaring in war chants "kill

[179] -----, 'Ethiopia Irredentism', Eritrea Intelligence Bureau, 25/3/1943. F.O. 371/35631. pp. 44.
[180] Rene Lefort, attributes this to "The pillage that took place: whole factories were disassembled and reassembled in Shoa" (Ethiopian province where the capital Addis Ababa is located. In fact, Rene stated "This pillage was one of the motors of the modernization of the Ethiopian economy in the 1950s." Rene Lefort, Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?, London, Zed Press,1983, p.41.
[181] See Selassie, Conflict and Intervention, op. cit., p.
[182] Iyob, op. cit., p.64.

anyone who does not comply with our wishes."[183] With this, the well orchestrated and consistently implemented annexation of Eritrea was as much the ending of one chapter as the opening of another. Because, as Lefot noted, "the empire had overreached itself: the morsel was too big not to stick in its throat."[184] In fact, by then it has already been on its second years since the Eritrean armed struggle to have started.

4.2. Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM)

This organization was the first organization dedicated to the liberation of Eritrea from Ethiopian rule had a short life before succumbing to factional opposition and its own inadequacies. Despite the widely remembered and lasting popularity of this organization, very little is known generally about its organizational structure and its leadership. The main reason for this, incognizance, is the obscure background of its founders and leading figures that had not previous connection with Eritrean politics.

The ELM was founded across the border in Port Sudan,[185] by resident young Eritrean exiles that had no connection to the sectarian politics of the 1940s and 1950s. They were influenced by the 1958 bloodless coup which resulted in the Sudanese Army taking over the parliamentary government that had governed the Sudan since its independence in 1956. [186] The motivation for these nationalist to establish the ELM came from a general strike of workers, students and intellectuals, which was met with policy brutality which killed or wounded hundreds of the participants.

This demonstration signified that Eritreans would resist Ethiopia's incorporation, while at the same time open protest was not longer a viable option for continued resistance. Thus, it was at this time that the ELF answered the need of the Eritreans by establishing a net work of underground operations. On the one hand, Eritreans through this demonstrations signaled to Addis Ababa that nay of her attempts to incorporate Eritrea would be met

[183] Tesfatsion Medhanie, Eritrea: Dynamics of a National Question, Amsterdam, B.R. Gruner, 1986, Pp.25-26.
[184] Lefot, Loc cit. , p.43.
[185] Markakis p.104
[186] Iyob, op. cit., p.101.

with fierce general uprising. On the other hand, Ethiopia, through her ruthless reaction to the demonstrations, also hinted to the Eritrean that open protest was no longer a viable option of continued resistance. Therefore, it became apparent that opposition to Ethiopia's continuing transgression of Eritrea's autonomous status should take another form. It was in response to this that the ELM was established in 1958. This organization was made-up of mainly students, intellectuals, and urban wage laborers, organized in a secular network of underground operations.

The ELM not only provided the solution to the organizational dilemma, but also transformed the political landscape of past generations of factional politics to one of advocacy to liberations through a cup based on secular and organized manner. The movement, however, had not gone further than the leaflet state when the police struck. It intended bloodless coup never materialize, despite the substantial inroads it had made in infiltrating the Ethiopia dominated police and security forces and high ranking administrative personalities. The organization's well woven organizational structure did not spare it as most urban-based underground organizations from the heavy handed government security agents. The state unleashed a 'reign of terror', and the ELM was quickly decapitated in a series of raids; in which its cells were discovered and destroyed. By 1962, it remained only as a wreckage of isolated cells that continued printing and distributing leaflets.

The ELM had carried the national struggle a step forward, at least by secularizing it. It had also "prepared the way for a protracted and popularly based armed struggle by showing the Eritrean people that any other, more peaceful, form of resistance was impossible." [187] The ELM, however, failed to provide a viable alternative to the discontent of the populace. This was known to the ELM leadership, which was already preparing to convene its second general meeting with the intention of starting and armed struggle. Nevertheless, unable to carry out its meeting it was neutralized by a new group of exiled nationalists who had formed another movement in Cairo- the ELF.

[187] Habte Selassie, Conflict and intervention, op. cit., p.62.

4.3. Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF)

Meanwhile, numerous petitions by exiled Eritrean leaders to the United Nations and the United States' government against the Ethiopian violation of the UN resolution…failed to redress their grievances.[188] Hence, for all else had failed, armed resistance appeared the only option. To answer this; the ELF was established in Cairo in July 1960. In contrast to the ELM, from the outset the ELF was bent on waging armed struggle. However, it was not meant to fight a protracted war against a well-established Ethiopian army, rather to ensure an armed presence in Eritrea so that to pressure the United Nations to reconsider the issue seriously. This was one good reason why the ELF set out with "poor preparation" and "poor leadership".[189] In fact, the front did not even have a formally structured leadership. The so-called 'Supreme Council' in whose name the leading trio acted was a fiction, for no such body was ever formally constituted. A vague division of labor was worked out between the three leaders, with Galadewos looking after military affairs, Osman Saleh Sabbe, Conducting foreign relations and fund raising, and Idris Mohammed Adam acting as the official head of the front in Cairo. [190] None of the three had any ideological conviction, other than plain nationalism not any political commitment, other than to safeguard their own position in the leadership. [191] In fact ideology remained a secondary factor to the defiant nationalism that united the separate elements of the ELF.[192] This vague character was to undermine not only the organization itself; it negatively influenced the course of Eritrea's quest for independence.

The self-appointed leaders of the ELF were, from the start, convinced that Eritrea could not sustain more than one liberation movement. They were opposed to the preparations the ELM was making to change its tactics to armed resistance. The exchange of accusations and counter accusation increased the ELM's vulnerability to the Ethiopian

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[188] Raman Bharadwaj, 'The Growing Externalization of the Eritrean Movements', Horn of Africa, Vo.2, No. 1, n.7, pp. 15-23, cited in V.S, Sheth, 'Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Internal and External Dimensions," Journal of International Studies, Vol. 24, No. 1, January-March, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1987, p.58.
[189] Pool, Loc cit. , p.41.
[190] Markakis, op. cit., p.116.
[191] Loc cit Markakis
[192] Iyob, op. cit., p.110.

security agents exposing its members to a brutal crackdown. Therefore, members of the ELM were forced to seek refuge by joining the ELF, which was the only available safe haven from Ethiopia's crackdown. The defunct ELM, though too late and too little, claimed its survival by sending tens of people with a handful of rifles to the wilderness of Eritrea. This set rivalry between the secular and young leadership of the ELM with the conservative and factional leadership of the ELF. The latter who saw the ELM as a serious threat to their sectarian and power-mongering egos gave orders for its liquidation. As a result, the ELM forces were ambushed and terminate in 1965.

The ELF leadership continued their sectarian lines and played politics of exclusion. They drew most of their social support from Muslim Eritreans. This was exacerbated by internal rivalry of the leadership, which fatally paralyzed the organization from the early years of its existence. It foreign policy, in line with its sectarian lines, sought outside support, mainly from Islamic and Arab countries and organizations. This decision was, instigate by the organization of African Unity's disapproval of Eritrea's problem (see Chapter Six). Surely, in the short term, this had helped them start off with the help extended to them by radical Arab states. Though it is taken to be tactical, the ELF leadership emphasized the Moslem and Arab character of their organization. In the long run, however, this tactic proved detrimental- undermining the struggle, as much as it helped it to kick off.

The latter mainly drew its social support from Eritrean Muslims. Other than that the first years of the struggle were overshadowed by the rivalry between the leadership and the competition for domination. The patronage system of the leadership fostered factionalism and weakened the ELF's claims to legitimacy both domestically and externally.[193] The ELF attached itself too close to the Arab cause that Zionism was part of its struggle. Internally, the ELF's affiliation with the Arab world exacerbated religious and ethnic hostilities.[194] This not only served to entrench hostility between Christian and Muslim

[193] Iyob, op. cit., p.108.
[194] Ibid., p.108.

within the ELF" [195] it also militated against the creation of a single united movement. Externally, the leadership became identified with Arab cause and gave false promises that an independent Eritrea would be an Arab state. On more than one occasion their pronouncements to that effect, coupled by their Islamic and anti-Zionist stances in contrast to Ethiopia's image of 'Christian enclave in a Moslem sea', effectively blurred the true nature of Eritrea's question. One such declaration stated;

> The Arab nation, to which we Eritreans are linked with strong ties of history and culture, will never be safe from the Zionist and imperialist perfidy until it expels all of their influences from the land of Eritrea.[196]

The ranks of the ELF increased with the influx of new recruits that had fled Eritrean air bombardment and harsh economic situation. The ELF leadership met in Kessala (Sudan) in late 1965 to reorganize the movement, initially into four zones the fifth was added later.[197] This change of structure was warranted mainly by three factors: one, its weak organizational structure that could hardly accommodate the newcomers; two, sustainability and security, a highly concentrate units could be tracked easily, and as the units operated around dependent on areas which were thinly populated regions of the country; three, the mode of organization was chosen on ethnic and religious lines that suited and reflect the division of the leadership along these lines. Because, the three member political leadership in Cairo was "attached to in patrimonial relations based on kinship and clan loyalties."[198] A centralized Revolutionary Command was established in Kessala to centralize administrative and military leadership for the four zones, and function as a link with the political leadership in Cairo. Nevertheless, sketchy and ambiguous, the rules of the organization of the ELF did not define with precision the status and role of the Revolutionary Command, nor its prerogatives vis-à-vis the other

[195] Pool, Review of African Political Economy vol. 19, 1980, op. cit., p.41.
[196] Alexis Heraclides, The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics, London, F. Cass, 1991, p.177.
[197] The model upon which the plan was base was the Algerien Front de Liberation National, whose 8-year-long guerrilla struggle had ended in triumph in 1962. The AFLN army was organized in six territorial zones (wilaya), each comprising a separate military and administrative unit under the authority of the zone commander. Markakis, p.113.
[198] Iyob, op. cit., p.111.

two components of the front. [199] The regional commands were given *carte blanche* to generate their own sources of finance and to conduct military operations. [200] Moreover, the various zonal leaders, which were influenced by narrow circles of ethnic prejudices of their benefactors in Cairo, started to compete against each other. Ethiopia, exploiting this rivalry, started to attack these zones one at a time. These leaders who wanted to see their rival zones weakened were not helping out the other when attacked by Ethiopia. In fact, the forging of personal links between the political leaders abroad and the zone commands in Eritrea was indicative of the political immaturity and organizational nebulousness of the ELF during this early period. [201]

An internal crisis occurred between 1967 and 1970 when demands by dissidents within the ELF brought about a series of conference at Aradaib, Anseba, Adobha and Sadoho. The key demands were encapsulated under the broad slogans of 'Unity of the Forces,' 'Democracy for the Fighters,' 'Leadership in the field' and 'Problems of the Peasants.' The issues ranged from military strategy to internal democracy and from the relationship between the fighters and the leadership to that between the fighters and the peasantry. The coalescing of such fundamental issues not only marked the depth of the crisis, but also the failure of the ELF to transform itself as it expanded. The demands emanated as much out of military necessity as out of political principles. Hence, the ELF remained a crisis wracked movement devoid of strong popular support, which depended on outside support for its sustenance. Relenting to pressures from the increasingly politicized sectors of the organization especially those trained in Syria, China, Cuba…etc compelled the leadership in Cairo to agree to reunite the army in 1968; subsequently a meeting was called in Adobha to that end. Yet, the leadership in Cairo was not ready to ring genuine changes. In fact, they tried to sabotage the unification endeavors to forestall any new changes. It proceeded nevertheless. Unification of the zones reflected a new political and military consciousness.[202] The larger size of the organization also created internal

[199] Markakis, p.114.
[200] David Pool, Review of African Political Economy vol. 19 , 1980, op. cit., pp.40-41.
[201] David Pool, Review of African Political Economy vol. 19 , 1980, op. cit., p.41.
[202] Ibid., pp.40-41.

divisions between urban and rural elements, socialists and nationalists, and Christians and Muslims. Although these divisions did not take any clear form, they were magnified as the ELF extended its operations and won international publicity. Many progressive forces initiated a correctional movement and were met with brute force. The leadership's resort to force to quell the reformists did not reverse the situation; rather it only exacerbated the problem. Thus, the reformists and like-minded combatants, failing to reform the organization from within, broke away in 1970 in three splinter groups to avoid the notice of the security agents of the organization. Later the splinter groups joined forces and established a common front, which was named in its first congress in 1977, Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

4.4. Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)

The young educated, who had pressed for reform eventually broke away from the ELF to escape the overarching reality of persecution, were elected to leadership. Thus, these people who had set out to heal the ills of the ELF, departed with a clear and explicitly political goals and military objective. These goals and objectives were first spelled out in the organizations 1971 Manifesto titled "We and Our Goals". The manifesto, which set the broad guidelines for the EPLF and in a way hinted the main reasons for its break away, placed strong emphasis on overcoming ethnic and religious differences by stating; "…we are freedom fighters and not crusaders…we are Eritreans and not Arabs…Our stand is neither ethnic nor sectarian."[203] This paved the way for the formation of a national consensus, and the development of an alternative political program which gave the organization a brad popular base.

What appeared to be the first strategic task was to set 'protracted people's war' as its strategy and it was accompanied by the necessary institutional groundwork. As such strategy required dependence on internal resources; it established its first fixed-location rear base at *Beleket* in the Sahel Mountains.[204] The new strategy of the EPLF was at fully

[203] EPLF, Neh'naan Elamaa'nan, p.19-22 quoted in Ruth Iyob, The Eritrean Struggle for Independence, Domination, Resistance, Nationalism 1941-1993, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.126.
[204] Dan Connel, p.83.

incorporating the peasantry, the urban worker and intelligentsia into the nationalist struggle.[205] In addition to its highly disciplined combatants, the EPLF benefited from its broad base of popular support and its political organization. The EPLF became a de facto government in areas it controlled. It was a highly structured political and military institution involved not only in training its fighters militarily but also in educating them politically. The EPLF's basic units for political participation were national unions. [206] The EPLF largely depended on captured weapons and ammunition to wage the war.

The EPLF was unique among African Liberation organizations in that its leadership remained inside the country.[207] "… democratic centralism of the military based EPLF with great emphasis on grassroots participation."[208] Militarily, the EPLF has been the only African revolutionary movement capable of seizing towns. The fact is worth stressing, for the label 'guerilla' can cover many different levels of struggle. The only movement that can be compared to the EPLF is the PAIGC in Guinea- Bissau led by Amilcar Cabral. In the 1978 the EPLF virtually controlled almost all major towns and strategic routes. With the exception of Chinese and Indochinese movements, no other movement in the last four decades has demonstrated such a military capacity as demonstrated by the decade long siege of *Nakfa*[209] (1978-1988). Though this siege was unique in the history of liberation movements it received little coverage in the international press. Among the very few who wrote about it, Chaliand noted, "Nowhere has such a political will to hold on to ground militarily been realized with such energy and for such a long period." [210]

Sporadic armed conflict ensured between the EPLF and the ELF during 1972-1974. The EPLF, a more explicitly Marxist, better organize and less associated with Islam and Arab

[205] Ibid., p.45.
[206] Ethiopia Eritrea and the Mengistu Regime United Nations Commission to Eritrea, 1950. Courtesy United Nations
[207] The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 1994, p. 172
[208] Loc cit.
[209] The EPLF, which is presently ruling Eritrean under the name People's Front for Justice and Democracy (PFDJ), when Eritrea released its first currency in 1997, it was named Nakfa after the town, which is taken as the symbol of tenacity and endurance at the time of the siege.
[210] Ge'rard Chaliada: the struggle for Africa: Conflict of great powers. Hong Kong, 1982, pp. 99-100.

support, gained much more than its older rival, the ELF.[211] The internal strive was viewed as Muslim nationalist ELF versus Christian Marxist-Leninist EPLF. It was even was attributed to "personality cult and the quest for military domination." [212] Ideological difference, if there was any, was not the cause either. For the "development of ideological differences was more a consequence of the crisis than causative."[213] This dispute was one of secularism versus sectarianism. This dispute broke out into violent fratricidal wars because of the ELF leadership's attempt to destroy the EPLF. In fact, it was not only a threat to the ELF, but Ethiopia right from its inception, felt more threatened than the numerous ELF. So the EPLF was caught between the crossfire of both Ethiopia and the ELF seeking to nib it at its infancy. However, because of its integrity and social base it survived the assault. In the passing of time, the EPLF grew stronger at the cost of the less popular ELF. When the latter's intransigence evaded any peaceful coexistence, the EPLF struck back disbanding the ELF and pushing it across to the Sudan. Once driven out of Eritrea, the ELF could not regroup itself again, as internal politics of exclusion dynamited it into numerous ineffective fragments. Moreover, as it has lost its support at home as a result of corruption and squabbles of exiled leader, in not time the movement was wiped out of the annals of the Eritrean national struggle. What remained were the legacies of its spoils both at home and abroad, which took the EPLF much time and resources to fix. Most difficult was the image of Eritrea's struggle the ELF helped to reinforce.

The EPLF's diplomatic efforts were largely geared towards achieving primarily two goal: first, to secure the humanitarian aid to sustain the huge social network it had established at its rear base to accommodate and feed the hundreds of thousands of war and famine internally displace nations; second, to seek legitimacy and, as demonstrated by its 1980 referendum proposal a venue for negotiated settlement of the problem. Furthermore, the EPLF endeavored to secure the neutrality of especially conservative Arab countries,

[211] Christopher Clapham, New York, Cambrige University Press, 1989, p.112.
[212] Moonis Ahmar, 'The Eritrean Struggle for Emancipation' Pakistan Horizon Quarterly , Vol. XXXII, No.3, Karachi, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1984, p.53.
[213] David Pool, Review of African Political Economy, op. cit., p.34.

which some of them were trying to unify the disintegrated ELF splinter groups, to counterbalance the EPLF.

The EPLF which in many instances adhered to a non-capitalist development of independent Eritrea held that the "working class is most revolutionary and it is the vanguard of the Eritrean revolution".[214] From the outset, the Eritrean people's struggle was directed against colonialism, imperialism, Zionism and feudalism.[215] Initially, the socialist entity of the organization helped it to win radical friends. Cuba and Soviet Union were supporters of the EPLF, the EPLF;[216] Even the offer to recognise and negotiate with the EPLF came from this view. [217] The ELF also took a more radical orientation that before, but it was all too clear that that "Progressive" nature of came from a position of weakness in competition with the former. The Soviets have allegedly helped the EPLF, if not directly through third part radical states. Yet, given Soviets cordial relations with the Emperor, they were, by supplying both warring parties with arms, intended to "maintain the war in Eritrea".[218]

The EPLF admitted that socialist countries were "strategic allied of the Eritrean revolution," it also made it clear that these countries "had not extended the Eritrean people any political, financial or military support even during the day of the Haile Selassie regime."[219] Following the overthrow of the emperor, these countries not only stopped whatever relations they might have had with the EPLF, under the pretext that the "centre of the revolutionary process had shifted from Eritrea to Addis Ababa," many socialist governments in the region changed their previous stances from support to

[214] EPLF, Vanguard, vol. 1 No. 8, July 1975, cited in AESNA, In Defense of the Eritrean Revolutions, 1978, p. 25.
[215] AESNA, In defense of Eritrean revolution , p.83.
[216] Peter Schwab, Ethiopia Politics Economics and Society/ Marxist Regimes, London, Frances Printer (Publisher), 1985,p. 104.
[217] Legume and Lee, op. cit.,
[218] Ed J.M Lonsdale Coed J.D.V Peel and John Sender Transformation and continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia Christopher Clapham , New York, Cambridge University press, 1989,p. 112.
[219] Liberation Eritrea, Loc cit. , p.15.

opposition."[220] In the meantime, the ELF, while criticizing the opposing "erroneous stands and baseless slander" of the socialist countries, essentially remained on the same bloc and did not waver from "its principled solidarity and alliance with these strategic friends."[221] In March 1987, the EPLF held its second congress in areas of Eritrea that it controlled. At that time, the euphoric Eritreans expected that their goal of an independent Eritrea was about to be realize. New domestic and international developments, promoted the "EPLF to radically change its socialist orientation at this congress, although the germination of this change can be traced to an earlier period.[222] Four years after this congress, EPLF forces entered the capital Asmara in 1991. The EPLF, true to its "referendum proposal of November 1980," conducted the referendum, whose overwhelming result led to the declaration in May 1993 of Eritrea as a free and sovereign state.

This suffice in an introductory note on eh internal dynamics of the struggle. The next chapter has discussed in great length and has produced an aggregate of domestic and regional factors that induced individual countries to intervene. These factors have been collectively analyzed in an attempt to understand the relations of these facts; domestically to one another, in regional setting across states. Obviously, global events and developments have also been taken abroad, when deemed relevant.

[220] EPLF, 'The Present Political Situation', Memorandum, August 1987, in The Selected Articles from EPLF Publications (1973-1980), Roma, May, 1982, p.43.
[221] Ibid., p.44.
[222] David Pool, 'Eritrean Independence: The Legacy of the Dergue and the Politics of Reconstruction', African Affairs, vol. 92, No.368, July 1993, p.389.

Chapter Five

Eritrea and the Arab world

> Ethiopia, the oldest principality in Christendom, is fighting a war against a dissident movement sponsored by the Arab World.
>
> Christian Science Monitor, 6 August 1968.

5.1 Introduction

The Horn of Africa, at the crossroads, for millennia has served as a primary point of contact between the cultures of Sub-Sahara Africa and Western Asia. Beyond doubt, in contemporary geopolitical configuration the region constitutes an organic part of the Red Sea region and the southern periphery of the Arab world. The Horn it self an arc of crisis, had been beset by the spillover effects of the Middle East conflicts. To complicate matters, three out of the five countries of the Horn (Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti), while not ethnically Arabs, had promptly identified themselves with the Arab

countries by joining the Arab League. This was not to the liking of Ethiopia, 'the oldest Christdom', which traditionally sensed the dangers of Muslim encirclement.

Events in Eritrea began to arouse interests in the Middle East since late 1950s. Particularly from 1961 Eritrea contributed to the convergence of rival Middle Eastern interests on the Horn. Consequently, both the Arabs and Israel acted for and against Eritrea out of their respective misperceptions. Theoretically, for the Middle Eastern, Arab States that conceived Eritrea as the indivisible part of the broader Arab world: "…the fulfilment of Eritrean nationalism became a strategic and ideological goal."[223] Conversely, Israel that viewed the Eritrean struggle as a potential threat to its strategic interests countered "a rebel victory in Eritrea" [224] An Israeli Foreign Ministry official revealed this misperception in 1994 by reportedly admitting; "We thought they [Eritrean liberation movements] were just a bunch of Arab-Backed terrorists…was that ever a mistake." [225] Therefore, as will be noted in the course of the discussion, from the outset the intervening Middle Eastern powers were prompted less by considerations of immediate security needs than worries about how the balance might change later, if Eritrea wins its independence. In fact, as Kenneth N. Waltz, a renowned neo-realist, notes that governments in their "natural, and anarchic condition act myopically." However, he argues that the problem is not with their short time horizons, it is because, "They see the long shadow of the future, but they have trouble reading its contours, perhaps because they try to look far ahead and see imaginary dangers."[226]

This being the motives of intervention, as to which side acted first, though less relevant, the traditional 'Arab hostility' towards Ethiopia, as often said, could not be a viable justification for Arab-first argument. The argument is simply invalidated by the Arab governments' endorsement of the 'compromise solution' of the United Nations that

[223] Haggai Erlich, The struggle over Eritrea, p.56.
[224] Dagne, op. cit., and Haggai Erlich, The struggle over Eritrea, p.56.
[225] Geraldine Brooks, 'Post-War Promise Africa's Newest Nation Little Eritrea Emerges as an Oasis of Civility,' Wall Street Journal, 31 May 1994.
[226] Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Structural Realism After the Cold War', Journal of International Security , Vol.25, No. 1, Summer 2000, p.7.

federated Eritrea with Ethiopia invalidates this contention. Arab hostility towards Ethiopia concentrated chiefly against her control over Eritrea only when Ethiopia's own historical self-image and her prevailing perception on neighboring countries as traditional enemies, coincided with Israel's need for non-Muslim regional ally. David Pool believes that Israeli presence in Addis Ababa brought Arab support to the ELF [Eritrea]. [227] This view is partially plausible as Ethio-Israeli relations signified to the Arabs that Ethiopia was lost to them. The Arabs who had tried to woo Ethiopia by supporting its claims on Eritrea, this time it threatened their monopoly of the southern reaches of the Red Sea, thwarted their efforts to isolate Israel and their strategy to use the Red Sea as weapon. A Russian political analyst wrote in Izvestia (Soviet Union) blamed 'imperialists were hatching plans to turn the Red Sea into a closed "Arab lake" using Arab reaction to [Somali-Ethiopian war]. He further he said in "their viewpoint Ethiopia is an obstacle on the path to the realization of these plans. [228] Regardless, the intentionally misplaced accusation of the commentator, Ethiopia was viewed as an obstacle in the Arab designs of controlling the Red Sea.

The growing lack of interest and the ultimate withdrawal of the United States from Eritrea in the face of the growing importance of the Red Sea set the pretext for action. To clarify this point further, America's presence in the region had partially served to shield the Horn from Middle East conflict in two ways. One, America's stake in Eritrea gave Ethiopia a buffer against radical Arab nationalism, second, as Shepherd asserts, 'the primary US preoccupation was with the strategic bases needed to protect its tributaries in the Middle East, specially Saudi Arabia and Israel.[229] The United State's greater concern of Israeli interests in the region was at the same time prepared to tolerate Arab designs in the turbulent Horn of Africa. This tolerance, of course, stemmed out of the need to mute Arab opposition to its pro-Israeli policies. In addition the United States implicitly might have expected that fear of the Soviet presence in the Horn would oblige the oil countries

[227] David Pool, Eritrea Africa's Longest War, op. cit., P.45.
[228] Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXIX, No.15, p.5, Izvestia, Imperialist Moves in Red Sea Assailed, by V. Kudryavtsev, Izvestia Political Commentator, April 16, ----------.
[229] Shepherd, jr., op. cit., p. 69.

to close up ranks to the United States. This theoretical shield vanished, however, with the departure of the US creating a yawing vacuum, which states at stake rushed to fill up. Thus, it invited the involvement of Israel and other Middle East powers first and later the Soviet Union.

Apparently, Arab assistance to Eritrean movements initially was aimed to pressurize Ethiopia to break off diplomatic links with Israel. A secret memorandum of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry, vindicating the regime's expectations and displeasure, stated the Arab were continuing to support Eritrean despite the fact that Ethiopia had broken off diplomatic relations with Israel.' [230] Same document, as an alternative explanation, alleged the act of "Realizing the Arab strategy of completing the Arab sphere of influence on the Red sea and turning it into an Arab Lake". Ethiopia made this view public through her representative at the Afro-Arab summit in Cairo, who attacked the Arabs for 'their involvement in Eritrea and their desire to turn the Red Sea into an Arab waterway.'[231]

Undeniably, Egypt and Saudi Arabia alternately pursued what was later called the 'Arab Lake strategy.'[232] This idea, which embodied the turning of the Red Sea into an 'Arab Lake' initially, came from Heykal, Egyptian Minister of Information and former an influential journalist as editor of *Al-Ahram*, as part of a wider policy for the economic strangulation of Israel.[233] Aliboni, which called it Heykal doctrine, asserts, however, that Heykal coined it, beyond Arab nationalism, to mean turning the Red Sea to an 'Egyptian Lake'. This connotation was directed towards Egypt's attempts to put both the Suez Canal and the Bab-el-Mandeb and at times to enforce a blockade against Israel.[234]

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[230] from the secret document of Ethiopia revealed by the ELF

[231] Arye Oded ,'Africa, Israel and the Arabs: on the Restoration of Israeli-African Diplomatic Relations', The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations, Vol.6, No.3, 1982-1983, p.51.

[232] This view was expressed in 1972, an Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram renamed the Red Sea the Arab Sea, 'as all states dominating it are Arab'. This naturally stirred up antagonistic feelings in Ethiopia, which was omitted from the list of the littoral states. Basil Davidson, Lionel Cliffe and Bereket Habte Selassie (eds.), Behind the War in Eritrea, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1980.—Lars Bondestam, External Involvement in Ethiopia and Eritrea, p.67

[233] Colin Legum, 'The Middle East and the Horn of Africa: International Politics in the Red Sea Area', in Colin Legum and Shaked H. (eds.), Middle East Contemporary Survey 1976-1977, pp.58-67.

[234] In October 1974 at the Rabat meeting of Arab heads of state, it was announced that Southern Yemen had leased Perim Island for 99 years to the Arab League for payment of $150 million, and that Egyptian

Following Nasser's death the Saudis assumed the leadership role, yet their prime objective was not as such targeted against Israel but fencing off the Soviets. In any case, in some ways, this strategy partially necessitated the removal of the 'Ethiopian threat' and the promotion of the 'cessation and independence of Eritrea.'[235] Nevertheless, often the strategy was dwarfed by the immediate bilateral relations with Ethiopia and other short-term geopolitical realities.

Al-Amin Mahamed Said, head of the EPLF's department of foreign Affairs once stated, "The Arab stand on the Eritrean question is a clear stand of support for our cause." [236] Romodan Mahamed Nur also confirmed that generally there was Arab sympathy to Eritrea's independence.[237] Nevertheless, the conversion of the sympathy in to actual material and diplomatic support was not as strong as Western journalists have imagined,[238] and reported. Said confirming this noted the Arab stand was not often translated into tangible things. Some find cover behind Eritrean differences as an excuse not to extend any assistance. After all, a big aspect of the Arab differences has reflected itself in deepening our Eritrean differences. [239] Four non-exhaustive but major factors influence or/and curtailed these supports.

One, as Avraham Sela asserts, "Historically, the regional Arab system has evolved around two main conflictual foci- inter-Arab competitions for regional hegemony and Palestinian Problem.[240] Thus, Arab support to Eritrea was highly influenced by these

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forces had taken up positions on the island; New York Times, October 30, 1974.

[235] Eritrea: From Federation to secession, 1952-1977, p. 31

[236] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.9 Liberation interview with comrade Al-Amin Mohammed Said, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the EPLF and head of the Department of Foreign Relations, conducted on March 31, 1982.

[237] Romodan Mahammed Nur, Interview with author, Asmara, Eritrea, June 7, 2003.

[238] David Pool, Eritrea Africa's Longest War, op. cit., P.45.

[239] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.9 Liberation interview with comrade Al-Amin Mohmed Said, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the EPLF and head of the Department of Foreign Relations, conducted on March 31, 1982.

[240] Avraham Sela, The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Middle East Politics and the quest for Regional Order, New York, State University Press NY Press, 1998, P. 14.

features of the Arab politics especially by the first, which also partly explains moves of those Arab regimes that had tried to manipulate different Eritrean factions.

Second, Arab own diplomatic status was influenced significantly by the interplay between two sets of factors: the fundamental strengths that the Arabs enjoy in Africa, including historical and geographical ties, and their weaknesses in Africa some of which are rooted in the past, while others are new. [241] To this connection, in large part because of Arab concern to avoid offending African political sensitivities, [242] not to mention that Arab efforts to diplomatically isolate Israel from Africa, should not make mention of Eritrea's question, given Ethiopia's key role in the Organization of African Unity. Worse, Eritrea's association with the Arab world as Iyob noted "placed them in yet another unfavorable position- that of being identified as instruments of Arab expansionism to Africa.[243]

Third, the attitudes and support of Arab states to Eritrea depended, by and large, on their relative geographical location. Theoretically, those states that are geopolitically less directly affected by Ethiopia's military or diplomatic might, safe Egypt, also were mostly front-line states in the Arab confrontation against Israel; gave overt assistance to the struggle. Yet, as most of the pro-Eritrean states lay far from the battlefield, their moral and material aid could not be a decisive factor in resolving the conflict. Actually, as Haggai notes support for the guerrillas was insufficient to turn the Eritrean movements into a force capable of defeating the Ethiopian army rather than enhancing their nuisance value. [244] Moreover, the support from these counties could have been far more meaningful had it been complemented by willingness on part of regional states, notably Sudan, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. These states, dictated by geo-strategic considerations adopted a pragmatic and therefore ambivalent attitude toward the Eritrean problem and

[241] Oded , op. cit ., p.51.
[242] Pool, op. cit ., P.45.
[243] Iyob, op. cit., p.55.
[244] Erlich, op. cit ., p.56

avoided giving the rebels significant support. In fact efforts by Eritrean leaders to obtain their full and consistent support proved fruitless.[245]

Four, ideological differentiation among the Arab states themselves and between Eritrean movements was another authoritative factor. In this view, both the emergence of the EPLF in 1970 and the military coup of 1974 in Ethiopia were the benchmark developments that triggered change of attitudes on part of the Arabs as regards the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict.

5.2 Israel

5.2.1 Introduction

Australian Parliamentarian report in 1984 observed that Ethiopian policy towards Israel has traditionally been against the mainstream of Third World opinion.[246] That observation was well placed mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the Ethiopians supposedly out of their "historic suspicion of Islam and the Arabs"[247] regarded Israel a 'natural ally' in the Red Sea region. Secondly, the Emperor, whose title included 'The Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, king of Kings, 225th descendant of King Solomon'[248] rendered it to "a more romantic way of connecting to the old Zions" [249] by emphasizing their historic ties and tracing their ancestry to King Solomon of Israel.

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[245] Ibid ., p.56

[246] The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, Regional Conflict and Superpower Rivalry in the Horn of Africa, Australian Government Publishing Services, Canberra, April 1984, p.60.

[247] Nadelmann, 'Israel and Black Africa' The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.19 No.2, pp.193-4.Quoted from Peter Schwab, Israel's Weakened Position on the Horn of Africa, New Outlook, Tel Aviv, April 1978, pp. 21-27.

[248] A.P.J. Van Rensburg Haum, Contemporary Leaders of Africa, Landowne,Cape, Citadel Press, 1975, p. 106.

[249] The royal family of Haile Selassie and the Amharic elite claimed to the Biblical Hebrews, contributed a special closeness to the relationship. Ethiopia has been described as a Christian island in a Muslim sea, and while the description is an oversimplification, Ethiopia's ruling elites have been drawn largely from the Coptic Amhara during this century. (Interview with Haggai Erlich)Ethiopia was the third political entity to adopt Christianity and the only one to maintain it as the official religion of the state even since the 4th century. That was in the early days of Christianity when the old religion was very much focused and modeled on the land of Israel. So you Ethiopians are oriented on seeing yourself as the descendants of Israel, the true children of Israel and Zion. Even your political nation ethos, the Kibre Negest, refers to Zion and the land Israel.

However, for Israel, it was rather a necessity not an emotional attachment. The 'Periphery doctrine, a broad strategic plan ascribed to Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, sought alliances with "outer ring" states to outflank adjacent enemies of the "inner ring."[250] This diplomatic doctrine, which as much sought to break Arab isolation as to encircle them with hostile states, enlisted Ethiopia, presumably a non-Arab state 'located' at the periphery of the Middle East and has 'traditional enmity' against the Arabs. [251] Meanwhile, Israel's exclusion from the All Afro-Asian conference of 1955 had compelled Israel to reorient its previous foreign policy where "Africa and the Third World in general marginally figured."[252] The revised Israeli foreign policy for Africa, influenced by the tenets of the periphery doctrine, implicitly sought the expansion of diplomatic and economic allies beyond the ring of hostile Arab neighbors. Thus, Addis Ababa, more or less as the diplomatic capital of Africa, was instrumental at least to keep Israel abreast with the trends and patterns of African attitudes towards it and to the fruition of its plans. Hence, Israel and Ethiopia struck up a secret security pact in 1954 that incepted an alliance that endured, with few interruptions, over the next four decades."[253]

5.2.2 Eritrea and Ethio-Israeli relations

As Israeli-Ethiopian relations were glued by the shared interest of preventing Eritrea's success, developments in Eritrea were pivotal to its mode and cordiality. For instance, at the time when Ethiopia was diplomatically struggling to take control of Eritrea in the United Nations, Ethiopia voted against the United Nations resolution that created Israel, to yield the crucial vote of the numerous Arab countries in the UNGA. Later Israel in its turn abstained in the UN resolution that federated Eritrea with Ethiopia. Out of strategic necessity Israel was in favor of open relations with Ethiopia. To Israel's chagrin, however, the Ethiopian Emperor who "wanted first to secure the support of his Arab neighbors and then annex Eritrea, before recognizing the newly established state of

[250] Scott Peterson, 'Israel Looks Further Afield', Christian Science Monitor , July 30, 1997.
[251] Joel Peters, 'Israel and Africa', London, The British Academic Press, 1992. P.9. Erilich, Loc cit., p.57. Pateman, op. cit., p. 95.
[252] Joel, op. cit ., P.1.
[253] Connell, op. cit., p.21. Roy Pateman, Loc cit., p. 95. Ayele, in Aluko Hodder and Stoughton (eds.), Loc cit., P.64.

Israel"[254] wanted it to go underground. Hence, although Israel opened up a consulate in Addis Ababa in 1956, Ethiopia did not officially grant Israel *de jure* recognition until October 1961 and did not exchange ambassadors until the following year.[255] The breakthrough came, however, largely out of dire security needs and as *pro quo none*, to the often quoted, Israel's role in suppressing the abortive coup of the Imperial Guard in December 1960. [256] In the meantime, if Ethiopia's move, along with Liberia and Ghana, to block Egypt's, then United Arab Republic, attempt to obtain an anti- Israel declaration from the Accra Conference of Independent African states in 1958, [257]gives any clue, then Ethiopia's positive attitude to Israel was growing.

Ethiopia is the closest friendly nation to Israel in an otherwise hostile Red Sea area. So was Israel to Ethiopians that saw their state as a Christian enclave surrounded by hostile Muslim states bent on dismembering it. Israel's periphery doctrine matched to Ethiopia's foreign policy, which has been affected by its traditional perception of, and psychological disposition towards, neighboring countries on both sides of the Red Sea.[258] Thus, it was imperative from their perspective for them to cooperate against these common enemies.

Initially appreciative of the pro-West and pro-Israel policy of Haile Selassie, not to mention that Israel linked the success of its 'periphery doctrine' with the territorial integrity and stability of its host, among other things helped Ethiopia in training counter insurgency troops and assisted her in establishing a military ammunition network.[259] Israeli apprehension of Arab strategies and their suspicion on independent Eritrea soared

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[254] Pateman, op. cit., p. 96.
[255] Near East Report, 'Ethiopia and Israel', Vol. 5 No. 1, 1961, p. 45.
[256] Following the explicit instructions of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Golda Meir, the Israelis helped the emperor, who was touring Brazil, to establish contact with his followers, notably Abey Abebe (the then E*nderase* in Eritrea) and Asrate Kassa, who led the campaign to quell the abortive coup. Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, p.57, Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 96, A special report in The Middle East (December 1981) made mention of Mossad Involvement in abortive military coup. P.16
[257] Arnold Rivkin, Africa and the West: Elements of Free-World Policy, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1962. P.78
[258] Amare Tekle, Ethiopia's foreign policy, 482
[259] Ge'rard Chaliada, The Struggle for Africa; Conflict of great powers, Hong Kong, 1982,p.99. Legum & Lee, op. cit., p.15. Erlich, op. cit., p.57. Africa Report, Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.36. Ahmar, Pakistan Horizon Quarterly , op. cit., p.61.

and their involvement increased with such realities: the probable affiliation of Eritrean leaders to Arabism, Palestinian organizations and their strategies, Somali and Djiboutian line up to the Arab League if it were any indication of independent Eritrea. This fear was also compounded by Arab attempt of denial of passage in the Strait of Bab el Mandeb to a ship carrying an Israeli cargo 1973. Israel's nightmare about Eritrea's future was, if an independent Eritrea joins hands with the Arab Camp in making the Red Sea an Arab Lake and hostile to itself. For Israel, this was even more important than Soviet influence in the area. In fact, this could partly explain why Israel was continuously supporting a Marxist-Leninist military junta that had sided to the Soviet block and more ironically hosts a PLO office. The Israelis are therefore keen to help promote any policy capable of preventing the Red Sea from becoming an 'Arab lake'. [260]

Ethiopia on 18 October 1973, in the wake of the Yom Kippur War along with 28 African states, broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Arab threat of an Arab oil embargo, partly to gain the Arab backing in her campaign against the ELF and partly to be in step with most OAU member states are some of the reasons given for this. Perhaps the thereat to move the OAU did carry some weight in the mind of the Emperor when he took this decision.[261]

In any case, Israeli withdrawal left a wide security gap, especially in the troubled Eritrea where Israeli help was most needed. Not before a little more than three months, a group of junior officers from the army toppled the Emperor. Arguably, Israeli military personals would have made a difference, at least if not by avoiding the coup, by influencing the outcomes of the power struggle that ensued between the moderate, endorsed a peaceful

[260] Legum & Lee, op. cit., p.15. Pateman, op. cit., p.96. The OAU and the Secession Issue, Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6, p.36

[261] The threat by Afro-Arab countries especially Libya asked the OAU headquarters to be moved to some other country. 'The Horn of Africa and the Middle East', Africa Confidential, Vol.14 No.22 November 2, 1973,. The statement by the government, as published in Ethiopian Herald, October 24, 1973 read: "Consistent with her stand on opposing territorial annexation, Ethiopia has done her best to affect the withdrawal of Israel from the territories of Egypt, Jordan and Syria which she occupied. Because Israel has failed to withdraw from the occupied territories, Ethiopia has decided to sever diplomatic relations with Israel until such time that Israel withdraws from the occupied territories.

resolution of Eritrea's question, and the radicals that pressed for military solution. The latter prevailed over the former, which Israel favored. Though this development changed the domestic and external political landscape for Ethiopia, yet Israel was to find its way back as its philosophy of periphery doctrine was "functionally unchanged."[262] Thus, Israel having been what the Strategic Survey (London) called "a staunch ally of Haile Selassie" [263] set a startling precedent, as seen later in Iran, by resuming helping Ethiopian military junta. [264] However, Israel apparently had this time concern of Ethiopian Jews besides its periphery philosophy to legitimize its relations with one of Africa's most brutal Marxist-Leninist dictatorships.

5.2.3 Jews Issues

Ethiopian Jews, *Falashas* or Beta-Israel as they are called in Ethiopia, were the biggest Israeli community in Diaspora outside of the United States. [265] Before 1974 nothing is know about Israel's interest to Ethiopian Jews, at least, at government level. In fact, the American Naturei Karta, a Jewish orthodox group, once stated, in the 1920s and 1930s when Jewish Americans called for Jews to help the *Falashas* in Ethiopia, the Zionists emphasized that this was not of interest to them. It was only after they have run out of Russian Jewish emigrants that the Colored *Falashas* were suddenly one of the main objectives of their support.[266] In any case, following the 1974 *coup d'etat* the Beta-Israel reportedly became more threatened, with "an estimated 2,500 Jews killed and 7,000 homeless."[267] Thus, the 'rescue' of this people appeared as a priority to top Israeli officials of the time. This coincided with the official recognition of the Beta-Israel as

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[262] Interview with Haggai Erlich.

[263] --------,'the Horn of Africa' Strategic Survey, London, IISS, 1977, p.16.

[264] Scott Peterson, 'Israel Looks Farther Afield for Friends', The Christian Science Monitor, July 30, 1997 It kept ties with Iran for years after the 1979 Islamic revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini ousted the pro-Western shah. Under Iran's new Islamic regime, Israel served as the secret link between the US and Iranian leaders as the US sought the release of American hostages kidnapped in Lebanon. Though ties were presumed cut long ago, an Israeli businessman indicted in May for selling chemical-weapons material to Iran insists his deals were well known to Israeli defense officials.

[265] Interview with Haggai Erlich.

[266] New York Times, 26 April 1985. in Henry Cattan, The Palestine Question, London, Croom Helm, 1988, pp.358-359.

[267] The Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ), Written by the staff of PRIMER - Promoting Research in the Middle East Region.

'True Jews' by the Israeli Inter-Ministerial Commission in 1975.[268] Thus, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, securing the legal backing of Israel's Law of Return, which authorized him to act to the aid of the Beta-Israel's immigration to Israel, acted to that end as soon as he assumed office in 1977. In so doing, he took advantage of Ethiopia's pressing need for spare-parts and ammunition for American made weapons. Moreover, the revolutionary government in Ethiopia was sandwiched between internal schisms and winning Eritreans, had no choice but to entered into arms-sales for *Falashas* deal. The deal started that same year when "200 Ethiopian Jews were allowed to leave to Israel aboard an Israeli military jet that had emptied its military cargo and was returning to Israel.[269] The *Falashas* who consider themselves to be Jews of the earliest times-found on arrival that Israeli Chief Rabbis insisted that they were not authentic Jews but should be 'converted' to Judaism.[270] However, in 1978 Ethiopia to save its face from its radical Arab supporters and to mute strong criticism from the conservative Arab states, apparently severed its relations with Israel following remarks by Moshe Dayan, the then Israeli Foreign Minister, who had reportedly admitted that Israel was providing security assistance to Ethiopia.

Though Ethiopia asked Israeli personnel to leave the country and seemingly cut relations, there were ample evidences that prove otherwise.[271] Besides, the desire in either party to resume relations, the great Ethiopian famine of 1984 also added another imputes. Obviously, the Beta-Israel suffered from the scorch of famine as any other Ethiopian. Yet, Zionist organizations voiced their probable concern that the Beta-Israel suffered

[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Henry Cattan, The Palestine Question, London, Croom Helm, 1988, pp.358-359.
[271] In December 1981 a special report in The Middle East Journal revealed the continuation of cooperation as quoted in Ethan A. Nadelmann, Israel and Black Africa, The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.19 No.2, pp.193-4. Yet another official report The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, in April 1984, cited what the report calls information acquired from a commercially available survey of African affairs supplied to subscribers on a confidential basis stated that Ethiopia was allowed to access to documents captured from EPLF's [Eritrea's] office in Beirut during Israel's invasion of Lebanon.. Judith Perera in The Middle East July 1986 reported that Israel gave Ethiopia weapons captured during the invasion of Lebanon. A Working Paper presented at the Ethiopian research Council Convention, University of Maryland, September 1, 1990 also alleged that Israel sold 100,000 Egyptian captured Kalashnikov sub- machine guns to Ethiopia. Israeli provision of communications training and the Presidential Guard training were some other that
were undertaken in 1983 and 1984 respectively.

more by the subsequent "villagization," program, which the regime introduced.[272] Thus, this development required Israel to call for the resumption of the rescue mission. Similarly, Ethiopia's appeal for famine relief, also allowed Israel and United States to exert a modicum of pressure for the release of the Beta Israel,[273] which was marked by a massive airlift named 'Operation Moses'. The US *charge de affair* in Ethiopia Arthur Tienkin in conversation with Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia Ratanove denied that the United States knew about Israeli military aid to Ethiopia. The diplomat stated, if Israel were giving the said aid, said Tienkin, it would be doing this on its own initiative, i.e. without consultation with the USA on such questions.[274]

The bargaining chip was diminishing with the passing famine towards the end of the 1980s. Yet, another international development -the waning of Soviet power- with all its implications to Ethiopia was well in the making. This development came at the time when the Mengistu regime was encountering defeat after defeat in both Eritrea and Ethiopia. Soviets realizing the urgency and momentum of events in Ethiopia, seeking to rid themselves from the onus of providing an ever-greater military aid, in 1989 they hinted their Ethiopian counter parts to reform, seek a nonmilitary "just resolution" in Eritrea, and improve relations with the West.[275] The Military rulers who from the outset resorted to the military solution to the problems in Eritrea, except that they occasionally engaged in 'peace talks' only as a tactical means of buying time, were not happy with the suggestion. Thus Addis Ababa faced with an imminent reduction in Soviet support and possible defeat at the hands of National movements,[276] invited Israel to come to the fore from its previous background role. Subsequently, relations were then restored to the pre-

[272] This program which not only uprooted villages from their natural habitat and moved them to other settlements, it also increased 'anti-Semitism' as the Beta-Israel were made to share shelters with the other communities.
[273] Promoting Research in the Middle East Region.
[274] Memorandum of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov with U.S. Charge d'Affaires A. Tienkin, 3 September 1977 TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From the journal of 6 September 1977 Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 339 EMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION with USA charge d'affaires in Ethiopia A[RTHUR] TIENKIN 3 September 1977 By previous agreement I met with A. Tienkin at the Soviet Embassy. During the discussion he made the following comments.
[275] Terrence Lyons, The International Context of Internal War: Ethiopia/Eritrea, p.91
[276] Eritrean nationalists had taken in February 1990 the port city of Massawa, strangling the Ethiopia government its main point of entry for military equipments and ammunition.

1973 period when Israel re-opened her embassy in Addis Ababa on December 17, 1989.[277]

Critics' reaction to this development was that it will only result in increased Arab aid to the Ethiopian resistance."[278] In spite of their arms for Jews émigré relations with Ethiopia Israel tried to justify, it in terms of the older version- Ethiopia's strategic importance and 'Eritrean separatists threat'. Israeli new ambassador to Ethiopia said, "An independent Eritrea would place the Red Sea under Arab control".[279] On November 1, 1990 under the pretext of family reunion, Ethiopia announced in Washington that all Ethiopian Jews were free to leave for Israel. Tel Aviv as a *pro quo none* of this announcement started, among other things, furnished an array of military assistance to Addis Ababa.[280] In return for this aid, Ethiopia permitted the emigration of the Beta Israel, which was called Operation Solomon.[281] This operation rescued a total of 14,324 Ethiopian Jews, as twice the number of Operations Moses and Joshua, in a mere fraction

[277] Sweden represented Israeli interests in Ethiopia prior to the restoration of relations. Dagne, Theodore S. " Ethiopian Jews" congressional research Service Update Nov. 30, 1990)

[278] Raymond W. Copson, Ethiopia: war and Famine. Congressional research Service, Jan. 4, 1991. Though not formally stated, the New York Times mentions- "The restoration of Ethiopia's ties with Israel caused a negative response in the Arab world. Rachelle Marshall, Israeli Arms Will Block Food Shipments to Hungry Eritreans, Special Report Middle East, March 1990, P 8. The Ethiopian embassy in Moscow declared that 'this decision not only brought about unfriendly commentary in certain circles, but also led to increased anti-Ethiopian attacks from some Arab countries. It was Libya and Sudan that came out especially with strong against Ethiopia.

[279] New York Times, Feb. 7, 1990.

[280] According to a New York Times report, this included 150,000 rifles, cluster bombs, ten to twenty military advisers to train Mengistu's Presidential Guard, and an unknown number of instructors to work with Ethiopian commando units. US officials made it clear at that time that Jews immigration was a key conditions for improved US- Ethiopian relations. Getting the Jews out of Ethiopia would have deprived Israel of an excuse for this military aid to Mengstu, which the US had vocally opposed." Israeli Foreign Affairs , vol. VI # 12 December 1990. The report in the *Jewish Bulletin,* for instance, was headlined "Deal Is Cut to Rescue Jews Stuck in Ethiopia." The headline of a similar news story in the Sunday Times of London read, "Israel and Ethiopia in Gun Deal." Rachelle Marshall, Israeli Arms Will Block Food Shipments to Hungry Eritreans, Special Report Middle East, March 1990, P 8.

[281] At this time Mengustu had already fled to Zimbabwe, where he is currently residing, in early may, and the Eritrean and Tigrian rebels are to size Eritrean and Ethiopian capitals on 24 and 26 May respectively. As there was fear on part of the United States and Israel that rebels could hold the Jews as bargaining chips, timing was very crucial. Thus, Operation Solomon, named for the king from whom one of the theories suggest that the Beta Israel draw their lineage, ended almost as quickly as it began. The Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir authorized a special permit for the Israeli airline, El Al, to fly on the Jewish Sabbath. On Friday, May 24, and continuing non-stop for 36 hours, a total of 34 El Al jumbo jets and Hercules C-130s—seats removed to accommodate the maximum number of Ethiopians—began a new chapter in the struggle for the freedom of Ethiopian Jewry.

of the time; 33 hours to be exact from May 24-26. The exchange of arms for *Falasha* émigrés and a base in the Dahlak Islands provided Israel with both a strategic bonanza[282] and a public relations coup. [283] Israel has much to gain from the new immigration, despite the difficulty of assimilating people from an entirely different culture. As in the past, Israeli spokesmen will undoubtedly use it as an opportunity to enhance Israel's image as a haven for the world's beleaguered Jews. They are also certain to claim that the welcoming of Black Jews to Israel proves that Zionism is not racist. For Jewish organizations in the United States and Western Europe, the need to resettle the Ethiopian immigrants is a heaven-sent excuse for intensified fundraising, especially among those Diaspora Jews who responded willingly to humanitarian appeals but have become increasingly reluctant to support the hard-line Israeli government. Finally, until they acquire language and other skills, many of the Ethiopian newcomers will be a source of cheap labor, available to replace thousands of Palestinians to take low-paid jobs in Israel. If Ethiopians take these jobs, they will provide Israel-however unwittingly with yet another weapon against the *intifada*. [284]

5.3 Egypt

5.3.1 Introduction

Emperor Haile Selassie in his letter addressed to Monsieur Joseph Avenol, Secretary General of the League of Nations, to welcome Egypt's admission to the organization, having expressed his 'most cordial sympathy' and 'fervent wishes' to the 'old nation' he went in to saying,

> During many centuries, the Ethiopian state has with Egypt closer relations than with any other nation. Ethiopia is; therefore, glad to see this day the consecration of Egypt's full international independence.[285]

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[282] Rachelle Marshall, 'Israeli Arms Will Block Food Shipments to Hungry Eritreans', Special Report Middle East, March 1990, P 8.

[283] According to the Northern California Jewish Bulletin, Dec. 15, 200; Israeli soldiers and technicians were already building a runway and installing electronic devices on the islands. They were also training Ethiopian soldiers and repairing military hardware for the Ethiopia. Rachelle Marshall, op. cit., P. 8.

[284] Rachelle Marshall, op. cit ., P 8.

[285] A letter of Welcome from the Ethiopian Haile Selassie to Monsiewr Joseph Avenol, the Secretary

Very recently, Boutros Boutros Gahli, Egyptian diplomat and writer, shares this view wrote; "We (Egyptians) have much more to do with our Ethiopian neighbors than with the Arabs of the Middle East.[286] The Nile River and Coptic Orthodox Christianity are the roots of that long and uneasy Ethio-Egyptian historical emphasized above. It is common knowledge that Ethiopian church maintained contacts with the Christian communities of the Nile Valley and the churches of the east and was the cause of the especial relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt. [287] The Ethiopian Emperor who realized the political role the Ethiopian Church plays in the country's politic put an end to these 1600 years of religious tutelage of his country and people. [288] Hence, cut Egypt's sole strings on Ethiopia, while Ethiopia essentially remained as strategically important to Egypt as before because of the Nile. Erlich notes that Eritrea had always played a pivotal role in this common history.[289] As noted in the preceding chapters, both countries vied for control over Eritrea.

5.3.2 The Nile Hydro-politics

As early as the 4th century B.C., Herodotus, a classical Greek writer, observed that Egypt is a gift of the Nile. As Egypt's prosperity and existence are still prisoners to the annual flow of the Nile, this classical observation remains as valid today as in the distant past. As a result, the need to control the entire Nile basin system has always been the concern of Egyptian rulers for ages. As Gruhl states, "who is master of the sources of the Nile has

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General of the League of Nations, to Egypt's membership to the league of Nations. An Anthology of Some of the Public Utterances of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, A Press and Information Department Publication, July 23, 1949, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. P.10

[286] Interview with Haggai Erlich

[287] Mordachai Abir, Ethiopia and the Red Sea; The Rise and Decline of the Solomonic Dynasty and Muslim-European Rivalry in the Region, Frank Cass, Institute of Asian and African Studies Hebrew University Jerusalem, 1980, p. xvi.

[288] For one thing, Christianity, which was a factor of immense importance in the cultural and political evolution of the Ethiopian empire state, was dependant on the see of Alexandria for centuries. Following this negotiations with the Alexandrian Church and agreement was signed on July 13,1948 and was implemented in 1951 when the last Egyptian metropolitan was succeeded by an Ethiopian. Negussay Ayele, 'The Foreign Policy of Ethiopia', in Olajide Aluko, Hodder and Stoughton (eds.), The Foreign Policies of African States, London, 1977. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.57

[289] Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, p.61

the power to decide the fate of Egypt."[290] Among other things, this dire need brought Egyptians south to the Red Sea coasts of Eritrea and incited sixteen major conflicts against Ethiopia [and Eritrea] spanning between the Sudan (Gadarif Battle of 1832) and Eritrea the battle of Gurae in 1876.[291] The Egyptians controlled most of Eritrea until the Italians came in 1885.

During the last five decades, the free flow of the Nile has always been a national security issue to Egypt. The defeat of Italy out of Eritrea during Second World War Egypt laid a historical claim on Eritrea, in the Paris Peace Conference, to no avail. Gamal Abdel Nasser too tried to unify Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Sudan, Somaliland, Somalia, Uganda and Kenya under Egypt's control. This proposal failed to materialize either, with the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952, and the independence of the Sudan in 1956 and Somalia in 1960. Thus, Egypt's successive failures at uniting the Nile Valley forced Egypt to reorient its policy to neutralizing the Nile vicinity from any power that acts against this established Egyptian interest. [292] In one occasion, Boutros Boutros Gahli of Egypt once lamented, "The national security of Egypt is in the hands of eight [Eritrea was under colonization then] other African countries in the Nile Basin."[293] Actually, there are officially ten states as Nile riparian states, the most important being Ethiopia,[294] which puts it at the focus of Egyptian strategists and foreign policy makers. Thus, waters of the

[290] Max Gruhl, Abyssinia at Bay, London, Hurst&Blackett, Ltd., 1935, p.5.
[291] Zwede Gabre Selassie, Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, pp.54-83
[292] The crucial importance of the Blue Nile to Egypt was not lost to Britain, which engaged emperor Menelik of Ethiopia to an agreement in May 15,1902. In this agreement, Article III, engages the Ethiopian emperor…not to construct or allow to be constructed, any works across the Blue Nile, Lake Tana or the Sabot, which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile exvept in an agreement with His Britannic Majesty's government and the government of the Sudan. By 1925, Anglo-Italian collaboration was strengthened by the Lake Tana agreement, by which Britain recognized an Italian sphere of influence in Western Ethiopia. In return, the agreement recognized Britain's particular interest in assuring a steady supply of water for the Sudan and Egypt from lake Tana and the Blue Nile in Ethiopia. The Emperor, who has not been consulted, protested the lake Tana Agreement to the League of Nations, with successful result that the implementation of the agreements was suspended. This Agreement was negotiated between Mussolini and by Sir Austen Chamberlain, British Foreign Secretary, and Mussolini's program for the build-up of military forces in Eritrea and Somalia dates from the conclusion of that agreement.[292]
[293] Gwyn Rowley, 'Multi-national and National Competition for Water in the Middle East: Towards Deepening Crisis', Journal of Environmental Management, Vol.39, 1993.
[294] Lake Tana, in Ethiopian Highlands, is the source of the Blue Nile which contributes 80 percent of the Nile water volume

Nile River have been a major source of conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia. However, these countries have not gone to open war, but Egyptian leaders at various occasions have vented their threats to Ethiopia. To mention but a few;

> Shortly after signing the Camp David Accord in 1979, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat commented "…the only matter that could take Egypt to war again is water."[295]

> Boutros Gahli stated on one occasion in 1990, "…the next war in our region will be over water and not politics." [296]

> More recently, being suspicious of Addis Ababa's designs on the Nile, President Mubarak of Egypt threatened to bomb Ethiopia if they plan to build any dams on the Nile.[297]

With the commencement of the Eritrean armed struggle many believed, gave Egypt a certain degree of political advantage on Ethiopia. Some even speculated the Egyptian government initiated the struggle. One such contention came from Collin Legum and Bill Lee who contended "Egypt, which immediately saw the new front as a potential instrument of its Pan-Arab Policy, was the first country to give it active support and training."[298] Eritrea's annexation may have had produced the pretext for the new manifestations of the old rivalry between the two, but it was least likely that it could have been the reason. It is recalled in late 1940s, when the United Nations Assembly debated the future of Eritrea, "Egypt voted for the establishment of federation…"[299] which was the forerunner of Eritrea's annexation. It is difficult then to attribute Egypt's hostilities to Ethiopia to political developments in Eritrea. Indeed, Egypt did not officially served as the midwife in the birth of the ELF that would lead Eritrea's armed struggle for the next one-decade or so. Nor did it nurture it in its infancy, safe the often cited and exaggerated role it is said to have played. Whatever Eritreans benefited from Nasser's Egypt is simply

[295] Sandra Postel, The Last Oasis: Facing Water Security, London, Earthscan, 1992.
[296] Gwyn Rowley, op. cit ., p. 23.
[297] BBC News Online, 11 October, 1999.
[298] Colin Legume and Bill Lee, op. cit ., p.23
[299] Haggai Erlich, op. cit .,p.62. See also Africa Report, vol.20, No.6, Nov.-Dece. 1975, p.35.

put; their share of the declared foreign policy of Egypt towards decolonization of the continent.

5.3.3 Gamal Abdul Nasser (1952-1973)

However, Nasser's predecessors, King Farouq and Prime Minister Nahhas, have sought to enhance pan-Arabism, yet another more aggressive vision for a regional and international role for Egypt emerged with the advent of the July 1956 revolution. Col. Gamal Abdul Nasser, leader of Egypt short after the July revolution, which saw Egypt's foreign policy as having three dimensions (Arab, Islamic and African), did not give much heed to the so call real and objective world.[300] Thus, Nasserite Egypt became the centre of pan-Arabism, socialism and more importantly, the centre for independence movements. Thus, it was not a mere historic incident that the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELF) was founded in 1958 in Cairo. Egypt attracted quite a number of exiled Eritrean political leaders who would lead the struggle later. Moreover, as part of the generous scholarships Egypt was providing to African students, many Eritrean students were attending at Egyptian high school and Al-Azahar University. The number of these students was significant that Cairo was the seat of Eritrean Student Union in the Middle East.[301] Thus, Cairo, as the champion of socialism and pan-Arabism, not only promoted Eritreans to engage themselves to ideological debates of the time but also as the center of nationalists and diplomatic capital of the Arab world, provided the founding members and young graduates, access to other Arab Capitals and to the rich experiences of other countries' liberation movements.[302]

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[300] The Egyptian tradition of looking at their foreign policy as having had their roots in Nasser's well known three circles of Egypt's movement: Arab, Africa, and Islamic. Theodore A. Couloumbis and James H. Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations: Power and Justice, Prentice All, Inc., New Jersey, 1990, p.135.

[301] John Markakis, National and Class conflict in the Horn of Africa, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, P. 109, writes that a sizable community of Eritreans had gathered in Cairo by the end of the 1950s. This included about 300 Eritreans students, who had usually gone to Egypt for higher education, benefited from Egypt's generous admittance to her schools of Muslim youth from Africa and the Middle East. In Ethiopia the Egyptian community in Asmara established primary, preparatory and secondary schools, which follows the Egyptian system of education, and had eight thousand students. Its graduates are awarded their certificates from Egypt.

[302] The ELF leadership following unfruitful search for material support in various Arab capitals were advised by a veteran Moroccan nationalist guerrilla chief Abdelkrim al-Khattabi to expect no outside help until they had established an armed presence inside Eritrea. John Markakis, op. cit ., P.111.

As Egypt was competing with other states, notably Ethiopia and Ghana, for the leadership of Africa's liberation, as part of its propaganda, acted as an inclusive umbrella of nationalist groups. Therefore, it worked to make sure that as many nationalist leaders as possible were included in the various regional and sub-regional meetings held in Egypt. As the result, Eritrean nationalists became beneficiaries of the good offices of Egypt to find their way into, for instance, in the Africa Day Conference held in Cairo on April 15, 1962[303] and the April 1962 conference of the Arab League. [304] Eritrea's benefit from the Egyptian foreign policies, which was not in any way particular to eritrea, is often singled out as special. Obviously, this claim was conceived and advanced by Ethiopia's misrepresentation of Eritrea's question as internal not colonial, hence criticizing Egypt for meddling in its internal affairs. Leaving the strategic objectives the Egyptian authorities might have had; Eritrea as a colony equally benefited from Nasser's foreign policy as the other Southern and Western African countries.

In any case, Egypt gave in to Ethiopia's fierce opposition and diplomatic string pulling halted its support to Eritrea before it got off the ground. The often-mentioned broadcast facility, which Egyptian authorities allowed to Eritrean nationalists to propagate their nationalist messages, if it ever was effective, was short-lived.[305] Probably, Nasser looking forward to his visit to Ethiopia in early 1960s, the 'violent propaganda' was subdued[306] and subsequently agreements were even reached between both countries to co-operate in the fields of airline transportation.[307] Later, Nasser in effect gave only verbal support for

[303] Attia Abd El-Moneim M., Egypt's foreign policy In Africa with particular reference to decolonization and Apartheid within the United nations; 1952-1970, St. John's University, Ph.D., Political Science, International law and relations, 1973. p.232.

[304] promised the ELF its full solidarity and support, because it was allegedly claimed that the Eritreans were Arabs and overwhelmingly Muslims that they were struggling against the forces of Zionism, American imperialism, and Ethiopian colonialism. Daniel Kendie, Egypt and the Hydro-Politics of the Blue Nile River, 3/22/02, p.9

[305] The United Arab Republic, as it was called then, more or less continually allowed Ato Weldaab Weldemariam was given a special radio program and began to broadcast to Eritrea from Radio Cairo. (former President of the Eritrean Labour Unions) to broadcast messages preached the Eritrean masses to rise up against Ethiopian aggression for independence. Provided low per capita distribution of radio receivers in Eritrea of the time the effectiveness of this messages is questionable.

[306] Department of Army, US Army Area hand Book, No. 550-28 Second Edition 24 June 1964.

[307] Arab Observer, no. 109, July 1962, p. 23. Attia op. cit .,p.280

Eritrean independence *inter alia* because of his personal relations with Ethiopia's Haile Selassie and the issue of the Nile waters.[308] Moreover, Nasser was also handicapped by his costly involvement in Yemeni civil war, which was aptly described as Egypt's Vietnam; he had committed 70,000 troops by 1966.[309] The Suez Canal conflict was yet another diplomatic bottleneck that further undermined Nasser's position vis-à-vis Ethiopia. In fact, this was the major factor for the on-and-off nature of Nasser's initial attitude towards the budding Eritrean armed struggle, before it was totally stopped.

Nasser's prior sympathy towards Eritrea obviously had to do with his dissatisfaction with Ethiopia's position on the Suez Canal dispute. The Ethiopian government, which opposed the control of the Canal by 'minor powers like Egypt and Israel', was circulating a proposal for the internationalization of the Suez Canal.[310] Hence, in the London Conference of August 16, 1956, concerning the Suez Canal, Ethiopia was one of the 18 states, which voted for the establishment of an International Suez Canal Board that Egypt named it 'collective colonialism'.[311]Egypt, which had taken over the Suez Canal in 1956 to give it a national rather than an international character, was opposed to losing the political influence, which the canal offers.[312] It is also recalled that Ethiopia had ordered the Egyptian military attached to leave the country during the Suez invasion of 1956.[313]

Ethiopia and Egypt, the two most populous and most important states of the region at that time, have never been in the same camp in the Cold War ideological divisions, safe the time of transition. Nasserite Egypt theoretically was an enemy of the pro-American and pro-Israeli Haile Selassie's empire. Nevertheless, the contrast of this ideological antagonism was not too sharp to damage their relations beyond repair, as their personal

[308] Roy Pateman, op. cit ., p. 94
[309] David Hirst and Irene Beeson, SADAT, Great Britain, Faber and Faber Limited, 1981, p.95.
[310] Ethiopia, which, because of its poverty and geographical position, has probably suffered more from the Suez closure than any other country, would like to see the Suez operation and defense placed in the hands of the United Nations, which would continue to employ the present (predominantly Egyptian) canal staff and which would- after deduction of administrative dredging and other expenses- pay all canal profits to Cairo.
[311] Mohamed El-Hadi Afifi, The Arabs and the United Nations, GB, Longmans, 1964, p.85.
[312] Africa Confidential, December 3, 1971, vol.12 No.24.
[313] Czeslaw Jesman, The Ethiopian Paradox, London, Oxford University Press, 1963, 23. Cited in Roy Pateman, op. cit ., p. 95.

relations oiled it whenever frictions arise. Moreover, immediate interests as noted above, waters of the Blue Nile, the Suez Canal and their cooperation with in the Non-Aligned Movement figured prominently on the conduct of their mutual relations. Therefore, Nasser's support to the Eritrean struggle was insignificant or inconsistent at best.

5.3.4 Muhammad Anwar Sadat Government (1973-1981)

In early 1970s, both Egypt and Ethiopia underwent fundamental realignments that oscillated widely and the contrast increased. Though the background was complex, and remained obscure[314] Anwar Sadat's, Egyptian President, decision to terminate his country's dependence on the Soviet Union, and the subsequent swift withdrawal of the latter, were the major events of 1972 in terms both of Soviet military involvement in the area and of Egypt's external policies. Before, things cooled down in Egypt another parallel development, triggered by internal and external processes, brought a junta of junior military officers to power in Ethiopia, which soon changed patronage from the West to the East. Obviously, the two of them were engaged in diplomatic wrangling accompanied by occasional condemnations and threats. Yet, Eritrea did not figure much in the Egyptian-Ethiopian regional squabble that ensued. Two major factors explain as to why Sadat's government was not an active supporter of Eritrea since it came to power early 1970s.

First, Sadat inherited serious economic problems that resulted from the disparity between Nasser's activist Arab policy and Egypt's limited resource base.[315] Thus, out of these immediate and more pressing economic concerns Sadat, unlike his predecessor, avoided the onus of maintaining Egypt's leadership in the Arab world. These economic difficulties and his search for a solution contributed to the evolution of his foreign policy into a more in-ward looking and less activist mode.[316] Additionally, abandonment of Nasser's 'Arabic-nationalism' in favor of economic liberalization- *al-infitah*- was another

[314] The Middle East; Soviet involvement in the Arab world, Strategic Survey, 1972, p.26.
[315] Al-Ahram Weekly, 23-29 September 1999, in No.448 asserted that in all four of the Arab-Israeli wars the Egyptians lead the Arab side both in the '…military political field and in the intangible emotional impetus.
[316] Korany and Ali, 1991, p. 161

indication of that.[317] Therefore, apart from his strong anti-communist and anti-Soviet stance, Sadat, a pragmatist, a realist with little attachment to grand theories and ideologies, [318]suppressed whatever foreign ambitions he might have had and focused on domestic issues.

Hence, the Israelis occupied Sinai, due to its economic necessities (oil, refugee,…etc), became almost Sadat's immediate concern as a new president.[319] Hence, the recovery of Sinai became Sadat's top priority that he was even compelled to make painful decisions of cooperating with the United States. Indeed, "There is no salvation outside America," became his credo.[320] Sinai, among other things, was also a priority in Arab circles as emphasized in the Arab Khartoum Conference of August 1967 that prioritized the recovery of Arab lands lost to Israel over its final defeat.[321] The resolution adopted in conference, by conservative interpretation was an implicit softening of Arab rejectionist stance towards Israel and more radical tone implies *de fact* recognition of the state of Israel.

It was *inter alia* the sum total of all these factors that promoted Sadat to take a U-turn from Nasser's policy of confrontation with Israel to one of peace and full accommodation through negotiations by his diplomatic *coup de theatre* against the traditional rejectionist policy.[322] With all its strategic ramifications in the Arab-Israeli conflicts, though Egypt managed the peaceful return of the Sinai Peninsula and opened the doors wide open for a comprehensive peace, which it was essentially a tradeoff between Egypt's self-image and national security. Egypt, Sadat had told the Americans, is the 'gateway' to the Arab World; win Egypt's friendship, and you will have the friendship of the Arab World.

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[317] An Arab term meaning 'opening' it refers to an 'open door' or liberal economic policy. Alein Gresh and Domonque Vindal, A-Z of the Middle East, London, Zed Books Ltd., 1990, p.70

[318] Korany and Ali, op. cit ., p.159

[319] Robert O. Freedman, The Middle East Since Camp David, London, Westview Press, 1984, p.172.

[320] David Hirst and Irene Beeson, op. cit ., p.342. Quoted from Al Ahram, 19 January 1977.An exchange with President Carter summed it up. I don't agree with you', said Carter, 'that America holds 99 percent of the cards in the [Middle East] game.' Sadat corrected himself. 'My dear Jimmy,' he said, 'you are right; it is not 99 per cent, but 99.9 percent.'

[321] Freed, op. cit ., p.172

[322] Rejectionism is the uniform Arab policy not to deal publicly with Israeli leaders.

However, this was far from the collective reaction of Arab states. Because his separate peace deal with Israel not only incapacitated Sadat but isolate Egypt from the rest of the Arab world.

The Sinai occupation has even a much wider implications. Emperor Haile Selassie, with Saudi financial inducement, officially broke relations with Israel in protest of Israel's occupation of Sinai. [323] However, Ethio-Egyptian relations went on head-on collision in the formers war with neighboring Somalia, which Ethiopia was accusing Egypt for intervention on the side of the Somalis. Mengistu was threatening Sadat that Ethiopia will block the Nile and Sadat was helping the Somalis. [324] For example, on May 13, 1979 an Ethiopian Foreign Ministry condemned Egypt's participation in:

> "…reactionary plots designed to reverse the Ethiopian revolution, to convert the Red Sea to an Arab lake, to dismember Ethiopia and setup a puppet entity in Northern Ethiopia that would serve the interests of imperialism and reaction. All these primarily aimed at the realization of their long-nourished futile dream of controlling the sources of the Nile waters and the establishment of Egyptian hegemony over the countries of the region."[325]

5.3.5 Hosni Al-Mubarak (since 1981)

Mubarak assumed office in 1981, developed his own interpretation of international and regional positions for Egypt. Unlike Sadat's American-centered world, he believed Egypt's success depended on multi-polar, opening its channels to all powers and organizations.[326] When contrasted with his predecessor Mubarak followed a more active foreign policy non-sensational and non- confrontational style in pursuing his foreign

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[323] Interview with Haggai Erlich, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia promised Haile-Selassie 250 million dollars for breaking relations with Israel in 1973. That was in September in Algiers. In October Haile-Selassie broke relations. In January 1974 he went to Riyadh to collect the money, just to be mocked by King Faisal said: "forget about the 250 million dollars. I will give you 35 million dollars to build the Grand mosque of Addis Ababa".

[324] Interview with Haggai Erlich

[325] The Ethiopian Herald, December 10, 1978, cited in Wendumneh Tilahun, Egypt's Imperial aspirations over the lake Tana and Blue Nile , 1979, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

[326] Konary and Ali, op. cit., p. 167.

policy objectives- these objectives mending the breach with the Arab and Islamic countries, close cooperation with Non-Aligned Movement, with Eastern Europe and Japan.[327] The main feature of Mubarak's foreign policy is its strong link to national economic interests; it is not concerned with abstract achievements for the sake of propaganda. The main target was to improve vital Egyptian interests. One such interest compelled Egypt to set aside Eritrea's question because it wanted to improve relations with Ethiopia as part of its efforts to protect its interests in the Middle East and in particular in the Red Sea and the Blue Nile Basin. [328] At the time when the EPLF was routing the Ethiopian regime troops out of Eritrea and their fall became eminent, the United States intervened to ensure the peaceful transition. Thus, it was reported in Arab News in August 30, 1989 that the Egyptian president and chair of the OAU Hosni Mubarak, had promised, at a meeting with EPLF leader Issaias in Cairo that he would "use his influence to ensure the success of Carter peace talks."[329] Probably this is one of the few Egyptian publicly announced connections with the Eritreans since Nasser's overt role at the start of the struggle.

5.4 Sudan

5.4.1 Introduction

Most scholars rarely omit Sudan from the list of supporters to the Eritrean liberation movements. In fact, Sudanese support has often been deemed decisive to the survival of the struggle. Indeed, this view has even outlived the struggle as *Al-Ahram*, an Egyptian newspaper, heralded in 1994,

> Like other Arab countries Sudan regarded the Eritrean struggle for independence as an Arab national course and looked forward to Eritrea's establishment as an independent Arab state.[330]

Surely, the attitude of a neighboring state to an internal conflict, as Zartman notes may be either friendly or hostile, but scarcely indifferent.[331] Indeed, internal conflicts in any one

[327] Konary and Ali, 1991, p. 157
[328] African Confidential, 20 April 1987.
[329] Arab News 8/31/89.
[330] Mohamed Abul Fadl 'Regional rocking of Eritrea's Cradle', Al-Ahram Weekly, vol. 3, No. 9, Jan 1994.

country nearly always draw in neighboring states in one manner or another. This is true particularly in fragile state systems such as Africa's, where regime legitimacy is often under challenge and borders are often porous.[332] Thus, Sudanese early involvement in Eritrea should only be understood from this angle.

Two more reasons, other than neighborliness and geographic proximity, could best serve to explain it further. One, according to Pateman's annotation Sudan had a tradition of allowing more political freedom to, and showing more tolerance of exiles than, anywhere else in the Middle East and North Africa. [333] This provided an opportune political environment for Eritrean dissidents who were opposed to Ethiopia's gradual and systematic erosion and encroachment into the autonomous status of Eritrea. Second, the Sudanese town of Kessala that hosted the budding Eritrea's national armed opposition initially came and drew most of its internal support from among the Beni Amer tribesmen. These people not only straddle on the Eritrean-Sudanese frontier, most important, they adhere to the *Mirghaniya* Sect of Islam whose center is in Kessala. [334] Following its establishment in Cairo, the ELF recruited armed men to secure its military presence in western Eritrea. As Kessala was adjacent to western Eritrea and as Eritrea and Egypt do not share a common border, it was imperative for the field command be in Kessala.

As it is not often to the tradition of emperors to acknowledge the existence of internal strives within their 'jurisdiction', Haile Selassie initially denied the existence of any Eritrean opposition against his rule until events started to surface. [335] As rebel activities increased the Emperor having put Eritrea in a state of emergency, also declared "a strip

[331] William I. Zartman, 'Internationalization of Communal Strife: Temptations and Opportunities of Triangulation,' in Midlarsky, ed., Comunal strife, p.27)
[332] Lyons, op. cit ., p.86.
[333] Pateman, op. cit ., p. 94
[334] Legume and Lee, op. cit., p.23. Pateman, op. cit ., p. 94
[335] The intensified rebel activities and the subsequent death of Commander of the 2nd division, General Teshome Erghetu who was ambushed and killed by the rebels forced Ethiopia to declare a state of emergency covering the whole of Eritrea, which was then placed under the direct control of Ethiopian Minister of Defense, General Kebbede Gabre. Strategic Survey 1970, p.52.

10 kms wide along the Red Sea and the Sudan frontier forbidden zone."[336] This decision came as much as from his suspicion of Sudanese support as from the emperor's own perception of 'Muslim encirclement'. In fact, it was only then that Sudanese authorities sensed the possibility that Eritrea could be a pawn against Ethiopia. Hence, started to give it little credence and authorised its activities in the border areas for a short time.

Sudanese support that at the start ostensibly was given a sense of altruism and 'Arab fraternity', were soon annulled by the ensuing harsh measures of Sudanese authorities against the rebels. Sudanese government re-imposed restrictions after announcing with great indignation that it has seized 18 tons of Czechoslovakian arms at Khartoum air port. The arms presumably been shipped from Syria for use by the ELF.[337] It had also handed over 'Eritrean liberal' as they were called in the Sudan, to face the inevitable fate of summary execution at the hands of Haile Selassie's imperial security agents. The Sudanese authorities were not deterred by ELF president's informal appeals through numerous articles published in the El Telegraph (Sudan), [338] and formally through a cable addressed to General Ibrahim Abboud, the then president of Sudan, that pleaded in the name of their "mutual faith and tradition".[339] What is undeniable, however, was the unfettered generous support of the Sudanese populace and civil society. The Sudanese people called meetings to support organised by the Sudanese-Eritrean Friendship Society and protested against the handover.[340] Sudan having eased relations with Ethiopia, it summoned Ethiopia and Somalia in February 1963 which Sudan successfully mediated cease-fire.[341]

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[336] Strategic Survey 1970, p.52
[337] Patman, op. cit .,p. 99.
[338] Having alleged that Ethiopia had destroyed several mosques, he said I came to hear from what he called a reliable source that Eritrean citizens need ten years to wait to obtain a permit for the construction of a mosque while churches are being built every day. Translated from an Arabic article published in Sudanese Newspaper, El Telegraph, 27 November, 1963, p.1.
[339] A cable sent to General Ibrahim Abboud by ELF Secretary Idris Mohamed Adem, formerly President of the Eritrean Assembly, delegate to the U.N.O, written in New York on November 2, 1963.
[340] Translated from an Arabic article published in Sudanese Newspaper, El Telegraph , op. cit .,p.1.
[341] Yassin El-Ayouty and William I. Zartman, The OAU After Twenty Years, Annex 6, p.379

Sudanese support, as inconsistent as it was, was not out of the alleged religious affinity or pan-Arabic policy; rather it was a function of the immediate strategic considerations of various regimes that ruled in Khartoum during the three decades of conflict.[342] In fact, their reluctant standpoint in supporting Eritrea, not to mention the harmful measures they took against Eritrea at the challenging moments of the struggle, revealed that Sudanese support changed with the ever-changing power equilibrium in the war between Eritrea-Ethiopia and the region at large. Thus, in analyzing dubious stance of successive Sudanese regimes on Eritrea's question that ranged from overt support to overt rejection, President Numeiry's 16 years of rule (1969-1985) was a typical of the rest. [343]

5.4.2 The Refugee Factor

Ethiopia's scorched earth policy, in retaliation to the harm incurred from the rebels, targeted civilians where by villages and hamlets were bombarded forcing hundreds of thousands of Eritreans to flee the country and cross to the Sudan. One of the most devastating spills over effect of Eritrea's war to the Sudan was the massive number of refugees and displaced persons it generated. The Sudan, herself one of the largest exporters of refugees, hosted as many as half a million Eritrean refugees and as many more Ethiopians who mainly concentrated on eastern part of the country. Though Sudan's refugee policy does not encourage the permanent settlement and integration of refugees,[344] yet, it is widely believed to be one of the most generous and coherent on the continent.[345] The pressure of Eritrean refugees on the Sudanese economy and the hospitality especially of the people of Sudan were acknowledged by Eritrean

[342] Mohamed Abul Fadl, op. cit ., p.1.
[343] Since, the major impetus for Eritrea's independence came with the birth of the EPLF in1970, most Ethiopia's military offensives came in his time, not to mention that his rule has seen both the pre and post revolutionary Ethiopia.
[344] See Regulation of Asylum Act, No.45, 1974, Sudan Gazette No.1162, Legislative Supplement 183, 1974. cited in Elias Habte-Selassie, Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan: A Preliminary Analysis of Voluntary Repatriation' in Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and John Markakis, Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Prospects for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan, London: Institute of Social Studies, 1992, p.24.
[345] Noble, p., Refugee law in the Sudan' Research Report No.64, Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1982. Cited in Elias Habte-Selassie, Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan: A Preliminary Analysis of Voluntary Repatriation' in Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and John Markakis, Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Prospects for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan, London: Institute of Social Studies, 1992, p.24.

organizations at various occasions. Once a letter addressed to Sudanese national security, for instance, praises the people and government of the Sudan, "for bearing a heavy burden in accommodating hundreds of thousands of Eritrean Refugees".[346] The ELF in its second congress also hailed Sudanese for their honorable stand in the reception of all Eritrean Refugees.[347]

The hosting of Eritrean refugees could not have been a point of contention between Sudan and Ethiopia. This is warranted by the Convention on Refugees in September 1969, which clearly stipulates "The grant of asylum to refugees is a peaceful and humanitarian act and shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act by any member state."[348] Moreover, the continual strain imposed on the Sudanese economy by the presence of these refugees was one key reason that motivated ruling elite in the Sudan to intervene in Eritrea. This problem became more acute especially at a time of food shortages and labor unrest in the Sudan during Numeiry's government. [349] Thus, his unstable handling of the Eritrean cause was a good enough manifestation of that. Numeiry having openly declared, at a press conference on January 30 1977, that the people of Eritrea were "demanding a just right" and he himself would "work with the people of the Sudan to return this right to its owners,"[350] in a dramatic change condemned it and collaborated with Ethiopia for its annihilation.

The refugee issue, undoubtedly, added a piece into the complex mosaic of security issue. Yet, power imbalances in favor of Ethiopia brought about by massive Soviet intervention made up the biggest piece. Ethiopia's firepower superiority, both in quality and quantity, also changed the face of events in Eritrea. The EPLF in the face of this new reality, having had the prior control of 90 percent of the country, had to undertake a 'strategic

[346] A letter addressed to Gen. Osman El Seid, Sudanese National Security Headquarters, sent by Dr. Giorgis Tesfa Michael, Chairman of ELF (C.L), ref./3/05041
[347] Eritrean liberation front political program approved by the 2nd national congress of the elf liberate areas, may 22,1975, foreign political resolutions the Arab world, on Sudan
[348] For full content of the document see Ian Brownlie (ed.), Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford, 1971, pp.18-24.
[349] 'Ethiopia and the horn of Africa', Strategic Survey, 1978, p. 96-97.
[350] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, July 1, 1977, p.28422.

retreat'. Therefore, the military strength and growing relative stability in Ethiopia compounded by the relative military weakness and division within Eritrea's liberation camp, as African Strategic Survey reported in 1978, President Numeiry was prepared to reach agreement over outstanding differences, with Ethiopia; soon to follow the closure of Eritrea's supply route through Port Sudan. [351] Much before the Ethiopian military victories against the Eritrean, Mr. Afwerki, the Deputy Secretary General of the EPLF told journalists in northern Eritrea in mid-1977 that the " face of war had changed, and that we are no longer fighting against the Ethiopian military establishment, but also against the Soviet Union.[352] A report published (23 September 1982) by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, stated that 13,000 Cubans, and 1400 Soviets and 250 East Germans were attached to the Ethiopian army. [353]

Despite the importance of Sudanese sanctuary in terms of logistics storage and transportation, Numeiry's decision to seal-off Sudanese borders to Eritreans was not effective. One, unlike most African movements, all the troops and material infrastructure of the EPLF were inside the Eritrea. [354] Second, their mountainous strong hold in Sahel, northeast of Eritrea, was inconvenient to modern mechanized army; EPLF forces highly experienced in mobile conventional warfare managed to defend its strong hold. As Reed notes, a country's politics often transcends the boundaries of the territorial state.[355] Therefore, supplies continued to trickle through the Sudan owing to the EPLF's mobilization capacity within Eritrean refugees and Sudanese populace. This is the case more in a war situation, where there is refugee flux and the border area is less manageable to the central government. The only government setback occurred at the EPLF-held town of Nakfa, which eventually became a symbol of Eritrean determination

[351] Though Numeiry and Col. Mengstu were scheduled to meet early in 1979, it was speculated, "the closing of the EPLF's supply route through Port Sudan seemed the likely result of such a meeting." 'Ethiopia and the horn of Africa', Strategic Survey, 1978 pp. 96-97.
[352] Moonis Ahmar, 'The Eritrean Struggle for Emancipation' Pakistan Horizon Quarterly , Vol. XXXII No.3 1984 Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi, p.58. Keesing's contemporary Archives, 1980, p. 30015.
[353] Ibid., p.32237.
[354] Ge'rard Chaliada: the struggle for Africa: Conflict of great powers. Hong Kong, 1982), p.100
[355] William Cyrus Reed, 'The new International Order: State Society, and Africa International Relations', Paper prepared for a Conference on ' The End of the Cold War and the New African Political Order,' University of California, Los Angeles, February 17-19, 1994, p.4)

to resist government control. After retreating EPLF units had reached Nakfa, they built heavy fortifications, including a forty-kilometer-long defensive trench in the surrounding mountains. Despite repeated attempts, the Ethiopian army was unable to dislodge the EPLF from Nakfa. Between 1978 and 1981, the Dergue unleashed five large-scale military campaigns against the EPLF, none of which resulted in a government victory.

Feb 1979- The president of Sera Leone, Siaka Stevens, adopted Numeiry's initiative and brought together Numeiry and Mengistu in Freetown. After some diplomatic wrestling, the session ended with no tangible results and with Mengistu denying that there was even a problem in Eritrea. [356] Previous mediation meeting (and February 1977, June 1978) had not delivered any substance as "In all meetings, the Eritrean question proved the key to any negotiated settlement in relations between the two countries. [357] Similarly in this meeting:

> Understanding eluded them. Sudan was calling for autonomy or referendum over the future of the Eritrean people while Ethiopia continued to insist that Eritrea was an internal problem. The fact that Ethiopia was gradually prevailing on the military front against the insurgents also reduced the pressure on Ethiopia to negotiate over Eritrea. Beginning in 1979 relations began to mend, crowned by a five-day summit meeting in Addis Ababa in November 1980. [358]

5.4.3 The Ideological Factor

Given Sudanese junior status in the historical partnership with Egypt, where the latter takes a proprietorial interest and patronizing involvement in the internal affairs of the country. Strategically, Sudan's vested interests in the Nile waters and its vulnerability to Ethiopia, which Egypt does not share borders with used it as a leverage of Egyptian interests against Ethiopia. Though, Cold War politics was not without its consequences on Ethio-Sudanese bilateral relations, evidently it did not create an iron curtain. In many

[356] Sudan and Ethiopia Regional Clash, SUDANOW (double issue) vol. 12 # 12-13 Dec 1987 Jan 1988)
[357] Sudan and Ethiopia Regional Clash, SUDANOW (double issue) vol. 12 #12-13 Dec 1987 Jan 1988)
[358] Nelson, Harold D., Sudan, A country study. State Department, Area Handbook (DA pam ; 550-27) Third Edition, 1982.US. GPO

cases ideological differences were secondary to immediate strategic interests involving- usually Eritrea and the war in Southern Sudan. Sudan's relations to Ethiopia were barely more than a mirror image of Ethio-Egyptian relations,

Numeiry's ascendancy to power with the help of the military and Sudanese Communist Party[359] apparently contributed to the initial socialist overtones of his government. Sudan had after all the largest and most effective communist party in Africa or the Arab world. In general, the party is pro-Moscow.[360] The change of ideological direction might have started, as early as the change in attitude and the expulsion of Soviet military advisers from Egypt in 1972. Numeiry's purge on communists and his fall out with socialist Ethiopia could safely be linked, however, to the failed coup attempted by the communists in 1971- a short time before changes took hold in Egypt. This state of affair, expectedly, caused the USSR to lose much of its influence and speedup the moves of Numeiry. [361] The negative impact of the abortive coup on Sudanese-Ethiopia relations could well be inferred from the accusations both governments traded. Numeiry charged the Ethiopian government for allowing their territories to be sued by "Libyan-financed mercenaries" for training and operations against Sudan. Sudan, which used to try to play a mediating role between Ethiopia's military government and the Eritrean rebels, he started to engage the two rival Eritrean liberation movements by inviting them to send delegates to Khartoum in yet another effort to help them form a united front. [362] This mediation did not bring the intended result as President Ja'afar-el-Numeiry' attempt for an immediate ceasefire in February 1975 came to nothing.[363] Col. Mengistu, however, spoke about the hostile activity of Sudan and other reactionary Arab states that plan in connection to the unification of the three separatist states in Eritrea to set up an Eritrean "government" and

[359] The Sudanese Communist Party is the largest in the Arab world, and the Communist-dominated trade unions were some 200,000 strong. Strategic Survey 1970, p.53
[360] Africa Confidential, Sudan After the Coup, No.13 June 20, 1963, pp.1-3.
[361] Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean Region of Conflict or "zone of Peace", London, C. Hurst &Co. (publishers) Ltd. (translated form German) P.151
[362] ----------, Numeiry Wobble, The Economist, by a special correspondent, January 22, 1977, p.64
[363] Pakistan Horizon Quarterly 3 Vol. XXXII No.3 1984 Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi The Eritrean Struggle for Emancipation, Moonis Ahmar, p.55

to proclaim "an independent state."[364] Mengistu accused "neighboring reactionary Arab leaders", especially president Numeiry, of supporting and arming Eritreans, and of intending "to force us to choose between our revolution and Eritrea." [365] Sudan is supplying the separatists with American arms as well as arms they have recently received from the People's Republic of China.[366] The Ethiopian government having protested against alleged attacks by Sudanese troops, in a memorandum sent to the OAU on April 11, 1977, the next day (on April 12), Mengistu stated in a broadcast that Ethiopia was being invaded by a foreign force armed by the Sudan and supported by Sudanese artillery and tanks.[367]

As the ideological divergence between the two countries increased Numeiry's Sudan closed its ranks with the conservative Arab states and the United States. Their ideological line up became clearer when the treaty of friendship and cooperation signed in August 1981 between Libya, Ethiopia, and South Yemen, which was widely interpreted as the forging an alliance of Soviet-supported radical states, against moderate Arab states cooperating with the US.[368] Though, it was not immediately clear what effect this alliance have had, the pro-America Arab countries also made a counter arrangement, with the active membership of Sudan. As far as Eritrea's cause was concerned this ideological divergence proved to be fictitious as in few months time the Sudan succumbed to Ethiopia's pressure agreed to seal off its borders to Eritrean nationalists again. Hence relations improved and remained amicable up until April 6, 1985 a military coup ousted President Numeiry.

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[364] CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on 30-31 October 1977 Closed Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow, 8 November 1977 Confidential With regard to the request of the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of Ethiopia Mengistu Haile Mariam, he was received in Moscow on 30-31 October, this year, on a closed [zakritii] visit. On 31 October he had a conversation with L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin and A.A. Gromyko. [Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

[365] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, July 1, 1977, p.28422

[366] Memorandum of Conversation Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov with Mengistu Haile Mariam, Ethiopian President, 7 August 1977, from The Journal of Top Secrets, Copy no. 2 16 August 1977 re: no. 292 [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 127-128; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

[367] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, July 1, 1977, p.28422

[368] Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Working Paper: George Mason University Chronology of Conflict Resolution Initiatives in Eritrea.

Sadiq al-Mahdi's government, which replaced the Numeiry regime made it clear that it wanted to improve relations with Ethiopia and Libya. Supposedly, this was the first step in the resolution of Sudan's civil war. The change in regimes in Sudan also prompted deterioration in United States-Sudanese relations, manifested by Khartoum's cancellation of the agreement calling for the participation of Sudanese troops in the Operation Bright Star exercises. Despite Sudan's estrangement from the United States and Mahdi's growing closeness to Libya after 1985, there was no substantive improvement in Ethiopian-Sudanese relations. The problem continued to center on Sudan's support for Eritrean rebels and Mengistu's continued support of the SPLA. By 1989, following the overthrow of Sadiq al-Mahdi, Khartoum and Addis Ababa had offered to negotiate their respective internal conflicts, but nothing tangible came of this.

In June 1988 the EPLF reached a common understanding with the Sudanese government on three basic requirements for the resumption of peace talks. These were again the three procedural requirements; namely, negotiations to be without preconditions, publicly acknowledged and in the presence of a third party. When these views were communicated by the Sudanese government to Ethiopia, the requirements were misconstrued as preconditions and rejected. The Ethiopian regime similarly rejected the offer for mediation by North Yemen, at the end of 1988 claiming that it saw no need for a third party.[369] The EPLF Secretary General Issaias Afwerki signed in July 1988, an agreement with the Sudanese coalition government. The agreement includes the following points: to establish peace in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region through peaceful means, that any peace effort should not be based on bargains the two sides will undertake mutual cooperation to bring about a peaceful solution of the Eritrean cause. The agreement had the support of all the major Sudanese political parties. [370] The Sudanese government, however, took a U-turn on Dec 21, 1988 by agreeing with Ethiopia to "act against anti- unity forces". The excerpt of the joint communiqué as aired by radio Addis Ababa read: 'the two sides reached an understanding that they would take

[369] Adulis, vol. VI, No. 7, July- August 1989 London Press Conference of Issaias Afwerki, June 29, 1989.
[370] Adulis vol. 5, No. 6-7 in Horn of African Bulletin vol. 1 No. 1, 1989.

an appropriate action against those forces which undermine national unity, territorial integrity and political stability.' [371]

5.4.4 The Strategic Factor

Beyond, the problem, Sudan and Ethiopia has had their own border problems, which still remain unresolved. Due to 'territorial exclusivity,' of this two bordering countries they are sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another.[372] Ethiopia and Sudan have a proven history of political and economic instability. Hence, the regional involvement in internal conflict often leads to "conflict triangulation" among the insurgents, home state, and host state.[373] Zartman's findings suggest that triangulation of a bilateral conflict generally worsens the chances for negotiations and makes conflicts more intractable.[374] For successive Sudanese governments the civil war in the south was their main preoccupation. The largest problem and the one whose solution eluded all precious regimes, civilian and military, is the South. General al-Numeiry's regime had surpassed its predecessor in generosity by offering the four million inhabitants of the rebellious and largely non-Muslim South their regional autonomy. [375] President Numeiry had said it would definitely not grant the largely Black African Southerners independence from the Muslim north. General Numeiry had himself served in a military capacity in the South was well aware of the likely to hamper or prevent the attainment of the modern revolutionary socialist Sudan, his self-proclaimed 'revolutionary nature of his government. It was reported that some sort of participation would aid any solution of the Southern question by the governments of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Cong-Kinshasa, where southern exiles live. We therefore expect overtures in that direction. He however, said they would be granted some measure of local autonomy. [376]

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[371] Horn of Africa Bulletin vol. 1 No. 1, 1989.
[372] Barry Buzan, People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, p. 1983.
[373] Terrence Lyons The International Context of Internal War: Ethiopia/Eritrea, p.88
[374] Zartman, 'Temptations and Opportunities,' p.40)
[375] Strategic Survey, 1970, p.53
[376] Africa Confidential, Sudan After the Coup, No.13 June 20, 1963, pp.1-3.

Haile Selassie had in 1972 mediated the settlement of the Anya Nya and that agreement stayed intact till Numeiry disrupted it with the promulgation of *Shari'a* or Islamic laws short before his deposition in 1985. [377] Thus, a prolonged fighting, which is still continuing unabated, started by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by col. John Garang. The Sudanese southern problem caused Sudan to deal cautiously with Ethiopia, especially on the Eritrean issue in two ways. One, it gave Ethiopia counter leverage over Sudan's link with the rebellion in Eritrea. Second, the Sudanese authorities were worried that in the event that Eritrea achieves its independence might set a dangerous precedent to the Southern Sudanese, who were demanding autonomy might encourage them to go for independence. Thus, Sudan's regimes supported autonomy as a solution for Eritrea, [378] could be viewed in this light. The position of Sudan is very duplicitous now: on the one hand, Sudan actively supports Eritrean separatism; on the other hand, it fears that in case of some form of secession by Eritrea, this would create a dangerous precedent, which could encourage separatism in southern Sudan. Therefore, Sudan appears to vacillate and Ethiopia intends to use this. [379]

In November 1962 Israel was the first country to open an embassy in Uganda, less than a month after Uganda's Independence on 9 October 1962.[380] Probably at this time it should have been out of Israeli need to break its isolation in the Middle East, however, later it was to pester Sudan using its problem in the South. To this end Uganda was of particular importance to Israel since Uganda borders the Sudan and provided Israel a base from which it could train and supply the forces of southern Sudanese Anya Nya rebels, which Uganda offered sanctuary for Anya Nya refugees. [381] This partly explains why Israel maintained the largest military presence in Uganda after Ethiopia. The paramount interest

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[377] Teshome G. Wagaw, Caught in the Web: The Horn of Africa and the Immigration of Ethiopian Jews, University of Michigan

[378] Regional rocking of Eritrea's Cradle, Al Ahram Weekly, 3-9 Jan,94 Mohamed Abul Fadl

[379] Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Felleke Gedle Giorgis, 14 September 1977, Original No. 354 Copy No. 2 From The Journal of Top Secret 29 September 1977. *[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 139-40;* translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

[380] Amii Omara-Otunnu, Politics and the Military in Uganda 1890-1985, London, Macmillan Press in association with St Antony's College Oxford, 1987, P.66.

[381] Strategic Survey 1970, p.53

of Israel was not so much in helping the Southern Sudanese obtains autonomy or independence; it was largely in response to General Numeiry's hostile attitude toward Israel and his support for Egypt.[382] For Israel, Sudan represented the southern flank of the Arab world, and she hoped to distract Sudan from throwing in its lot with that world by lending support to the Anya Nya fighters.[383] Moreover, partly Sudanese call for Eritrea's independence, as most Arab states, was viewed as a means of containing Israeli penetration to the Red Sea area and of checking its advances in Africa.[384] It should be out of this pressure that Sudanese leaders were involved in a secret mission that airlifted thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel in November 1984, despite the sensitivity of the operation to Sudan as a member of the Arab league that forbidden her to do anything that would promote the policies or actions of Israel. [385]

5.5 Saudi Arabia

5.5.1 Introduction

Saudi Arabia, a theocracy founded upon the traditional alliance between "state and Church",[386] manifestly is an influential regional actor in the Red Sea area. The monarchy is governed according to the 'puritanic principles of *Wahhabi* Islam' where the *Qur'an* serves as its constitution and the *Shari'a* as the source of its laws. As the custodian of the two holiest places in Islam (Mecca and Medina), the kingdom is spiritually attached to the faithful Moslems of the world who 'turn five times a day for their prayers' not to

[382] Up until 1972, a Sudanese brigade was stationed along the Suez Canal. Israel has a particular interest in ensuring that the Sudanese army was embroiled in a protracted conflict in the Southern Sudan.

[383] Amii Omara-Otunnu, Politics and the Military in Uganda 1890-1985, London, Macmillan Press in association with St Antony's College Oxford, 1987, P.95.

[384] Regional rocking of Eritrea's Cradle, Al Ahram Weekly, 3-9 Jan,94 Mohamed Abul Fadl

[385] Operation Mosses, a secret mission widely reported to be supported financially and logistically by the CIA, airlifted over 7,000 Ethiopian Jews (Falasha) to Israel until January 1985. Handling the Falasha issue was a political as well as a moral dilemma for him. At first Numeiry's policy was to let the Flashas to come to the Sudan as any other refugees and let them proceed to Israel as long as this was done with great care and discretion. After the disclosure, Numeiry resisted Israel's wishes to move the Falasha to Israel through the port of Port Sudan by boat or by any direct means. But he agreed to the use of civilian airlines to transport the refugees, but insisted that this has to be done on a small scale, and indirectly, i.e. to some location other than Israel. Finally, the Belgian based, Jews owned, European airways (TEA) was identified, agreements were secured, and the major operation was ready. Teshome G. Wagaw, Caught in the Web: The Horn of Africa and the Immigration of Ethiopian Jews, University of Michigan Dagne, Theodor S .. Ethiopian Jews Update. 13, 1990 congressional research Service, IB90105)

[386] Mordechai Abir, Saudi-Soviet Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, Middle East review Vol., XXII, No.1, Fall 1989,p.10

mention the *Hjiria* (Islamic pilgrimage) to Mecca. Thus, what Saudi religious authorities say or do can have a huge mobilizational effect on these masses that Korany states could even go above the head of their governments. [387] It goes without saying, thus, that this gives Saudi Arabia leverage over states where Muslims make up the majority or a significant minority of their populations. To complicate matters, Saudi Arabia, as the protector of the Holy places, and as a bastion of Islamic values, it felt it had an obligation to help other Muslim peoples. [388]

Saudi Arabia, though dependant on the vagaries of international market for non-oil resources stands, by all standards, an oil giant with the largest discovered world oil reserves and first international exporter. Since its first oil shipment in 1938,[389] the kingdom generated an enormous financial resource whose impact, though different, is not less influential than the religious influence the kingdom traditionally enjoys. Indeed, it is the complementarities of these two that promoted the Kingdom to assume an immense political influence and diplomatic maneuverability that Abir notes is far out of proportion to the size of its population. [390] Thus, a sensible analysis of Saudi's international behavior cannot afford to leave out these two components, as they are, *inter alia*, as much the prime sources of its influence as are for its liabilities.

Saudi Arabia practically was aligned to the West despite the commitment its active membership to the Non-Aligned Movement entailed. [391] In fact it was a bitter enemy of the "Godless" USSR, which it did not maintain diplomatic relations until 1990. The kingdom was anxious of the USSR and its 'materialist Communism'[392] than Israel and

[387] Bahgat Korany And Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.) The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change, Boulder, Westview Press, 1984, pp. 311-316.
[388] Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean Region of Conflict or "zone of Peace", London, C. Hurst &Co. (publishers) Ltd. (translated from German) P.152
[389] Saudi Arabia starts exporting oil with first shipment to Bahrain in November 1938. As stated in Ritchie Ovendale, The Longman Companion to the Middle East Since 1914, London, Longman, 1992, P. 45.
[390] Mordechai Abir, Saudi-Soviet Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, Middle East review Vol., XXII, No.1, Fall 1989,pp.10-11
[391] A founding and active member of the nonaligned Movement, which from participated in seven out of nine meetings (1961-1989)
[392] Communism is viewed by the Saudi Ulama and rulers as corruptive, atheism, intent on subverting the Muslim world and the Saudi monarchical-capitalistic system. Therefore, relations with Moscow were

'Zionism'. In fact, both Saudi Arabia and Israel literally ended up in the same camp due to their close connections to the United States. Though the Saudis to look tough on Israel "Emphasized the pan-Islamic dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict"[393] and pursued a rejectionist policy, their emphasis on "Zionism's early association with socialist ideology and the Communist political backing"[394] however, reveals to them deterring communism was the first priority and fighting Zionism a clear second.

5.5.2 Saudi Quest for Security in the Red Sea Region

Soviet long-term strategy in the Red Sea region was aimed at "Strategic deterrence, naval presence, Sea denial or sea control, and projection of power ashore." [395] This strategy premised on compelling, albeit faulty logic of "denying strategic raw materials to the West, gaining access to these resources for Soviet purposes"[396] it in the meanwhile left the Saudi kingdom precarious as Soviet short-term strategy sought to "escalate pressures against Saudi Arabia." [397] The USSR worked towards achieving this end through its radical Arab tributaries. This state of affair left the kingdom on the defensive for much of the 1970s, preoccupied in extending financial subsidies in a futile hope of neutralizing these radical states to take a more moderate stand in their foreign policies. In the words of *L'Aurore*, French Journal, Riyadh, directly or through other countries, was attempting to draw such counties as Somalia and South Yemen into the conservative camp it heads, since it is unable to tolerate their revolutionary socialism any longer. The heightened interest Riyadh was showing in unification trends in the two Yemenis, as well as its

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unacceptable. Mordechai Abir, Saudi-Soviet Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, Middle East review Vol,XXII, No.1, Fall 1989,p.10Bahgat Korany And Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.) The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change, Boulder, Westview Press, 1984, p.320-321.

[393] Bahgat Korany And Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.) The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change, Boulder, Westview Press, 1984, p.319

[394] Bahgat Korany And Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.) The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change, Boulder, Westview Press, 1984, p.319

[395] African affairs vol. 77 January 1978 no. 306 cold war on the horn of Africa (pp.7) peter schwab

[396] Peter Vanneman and Martinn James, Soviet Thrust into the Horn of Africa: the next targets Strategic Review ,Vol. VI NO.2 ,Spring 1978 (A quarterly publication US Strategic Institute Washington DC, p.33.

[397] Peter Vanneman and Martinn James, Soviet Thrust into the Horn of Africa: the next targets Strategic Review ,Vol. VI NO.2 ,Spring 1978 (A quarterly US Strategic Institute Washington DC, p.33.

attempts to play a role as intermediary between certain Middle Eastern states, was viewed in this light.[398]

In parallel, however, another new socialist development was brewing in the Horn, namely Ethiopia where a 'creeping coup' had overthrown Emperor Haile Selassie. As noted above besides the complex domestic attributes to the coup, Hiwet declared it was "classical, phenomenal in its spontaneity," the inaction of the United States before, during and after the coup was additional impetus. However, given the coups genesis and development, Haliday and Molyneux, and the Ottaways declared it was not "inherently revolutionary'.[399] Thus, US reluctance to satisfy the military needs of the new revolutionaries among other things immensely contributed for the coup to take revolutionary path with a radical socialist overtone. Saudi Arabia was hard hit by the shock wave of the ensued power imbalances on the Horn that put the USSR on the promontory. Thus, the United States incapacitated by its own indecision was unable to influence events in the Horn and was outmaneuvered to the periphery.[400] As the result, the kingdom went onto the offensive and started playing an active role in all Red Sea affairs, by putting forward 'the peace zone formula for the Red Sea'. Therefore, Saudi Arabia sponsored the March 1977 Faiz conference of Red Sea states, which of course, excluded Ethiopia and its came out with a strong final communiqué that protested, "No outside power would be entitled to exercise influence or to have bases in the Red Sea."[401]

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[398] The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXIX, No.15, p.5, Izvestia, Imperialist Moves in Red Sea Assailed, by V. Kudryavtsev, Izvestia Political Commentator, April 16 Year is Missing.

[399] Addis Hiwet, 'Analyzing the Ethiopian Revolution', Review of African Political Economy, No.30, -----, p.34. The quote of Halliday and Ottaways is also taken from same text.

[400] It is often argued otherwise, under the pretext of the growing weakness of United States' interest in the region. Subsequent US policies, however, give little support to such contentions. It later became clear that the US was willing to provide arms after the coup. In fact it did until 1976. At different occasions US authorities stated that the region was not less important to them than before. One such statement came from Chester Crocker, State Department's Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, when during Congressional testimony in March 1983, that the Horn of Africa had " considerable strategic significance to the West because of shipping and oil tanker lanes leading to Europe." In another encounter, Lannon Walker testified before House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs, March-April 1981, "We had to overriding objectives in the Horn. One, has to do with Soviet-Cuba presence. Second, the Soviet threat to the Gulf and South-West Asia." (Both quotes from James F. Petras and Morris H. Morley, 'The Ethiopian Military State and Soviet-US Involvement in the Horn of Africa', Review of African Political Economy, No. 30, September, 1984, p. 27)

[401] (quoted from R. Glagow, ' *Das Rote Meer- eine neue Konfliktregion*?' orient, vol 18, Nos. 2and 3, June,

The French newspaper *L'Aurore* alleged that Saudi Arabia was attempting to put together a bloc of Red Sea basin states by "offering these countries considerable financial aid." [402] The oil boom of that period might had enabled the states of the Arabian Peninsula, whose previous influence in the region had been comparatively modest, to play a more active role. Obviously, Saudi Arabia had gradually developed into the richest, and certainly one of the most influential, of the states in the Middle East.[403]

5.5.3 Saudi Arabia and Eritrea

Saudi activity in the Red Sea has been intricate and varied in its attempts to deal with the main regional problems i.e., disputes over territory, the conflict against Israel, and the presence of the Soviet menace [404] the latter perhaps being the most serious since the mid-1970s. It is from this agonizing concern of Saudi foreign policy-makers that Saudi relations with Eritrea's struggle should be viewed. Undeniably, as often cited, Saudi authorities have used their religious string to control the course of events within Eritrean national movements. They even made insignificant material commitments and sporadic media accusations against Ethiopia's repression of Eritrean Muslims. Yet, a closer analysis of Saudi attitude towards Eritrea's war of independence must distinguish between two phases, striking the line at the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. Such an analysis reveals that Saudi intervention was less dictated by affection for Moslem Eritreans than by *real politick* triggered by new political and strategic exigencies in the Horn of Africa.

Three major themes explain Saudi Arabia's restraint from intervening in Eritrea, presumably Ethiopia's internal affair, during the reign of the Emperor. One, despite the Saudis obvious distaste to the theocratic nature of the 'Christian State', the Ethiopian monarchy was attractive enough in the eyes of Saudi security strategists as long as it remained a conservative traditional monarchy allied to the West. Thus, whatever

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September 1977, pp. 16-50 and 25-68 respectively.) Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean Region of Conflict or "zone of Peace", London, C. Hurst &Co. (publishers) Ltd., P.153

[402] The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXIX, No.15, p.5, Izvestia, Imperialist Moves in Red Sea Assailed, by V. Kudryavtsev, Izvestia Political Commentator, April 16 Year is Missing.

[403] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship, London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1990, p.177.

[404] SUADI ARABIA, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf: Success and Failure in Regional Policy, p.168

religious interests they may have had in Ethiopia, the Saudis forgo the repression of Eritreans not to mention Ethiopia's security pact with Israel, to the maintenance of the *status quo.* Second, despite the prominence of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic posture of the ELF, as championed by its 'Foreign Mission' led by Osman Saleh Sabbe, at least to command the attention of the Saudis was not successful. Because, the Kingdom's preoccupation was more with Yemeni revolution (1962) where Egypt and Soviet Union were involved and Faysal suspected, was part of an Egyptian-Soviet plot to gain control over the Persian Gulf,[405]than in the Horn. Hence, the Saudis did not afford to support the Eritreans beyond token donations and occasional media accusations that Ethiopia was oppressing Muslim. [406] Third, dismay to the Saudis, a secular nationalism was in the rise since 1970 within the Eritrean nationalist camp and they were more apprehensive of the 'Eritrea's leftist and increasingly Marxist revolutionary image.'[407] In fact, the Saudis preferred the conservative, pro-west Ethiopia and wanted to see the Eritreans restrained. Thus, this stance shows that a Saudi concern was neither Israeli presence nor Ethiopia's persecution of Muslims but 'fear of being encircled by pro- Soviet and potentially hostile regimes.' [408]

The Kingdom theoretically played slightly a more active role in the Horn in general and in Eritrea in particular after the coup in Ethiopia. By contrast, Saudi support was just to counteract the growing communist presence in the Red Sea area. The military junta's decision to seek a military solution to Eritrean insurgence was a pretext to act in disapproval to the new incumbents in Ethiopia. In the same token, the Saudis who had previously financed Somalia's divorce with the Soviet Union were supporting Somalia in the Ogaden-war against Ethiopia. President Isaias Afwerki, then General Secretary of the EPLF, had noted "For them [Saudis] Eritrea is an instrument…as an external buffer area for balancing, creating pressures here and there to influence the situation in the Horn as a

[405] Mordechai Abir, Saudi-Soviet Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, Middle East review Vol,XXII, No.1, Fall 1989,p.10
[406] Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, pp.67-68
[407] Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, pp.67-68
[408] Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean Region of Conflict or "zone of Peace", London, C. Hurst &Co. (publishers) Ltd. (translated from German) P.152

whole and Ethiopia in particular.[409] Similarly, Richard Moose, American Assistant secretary of state for Africa, when he in March 1978 stopped overnight in Jeddah for consultation with Saudi Arabia *en route* back to the United States he was told by "Senior Saudi officials that they were providing support to the Ethiopians (sic) only to harass Mengistu." [410] Col. Mengistu reacted by stating " Ethiopian revolution is going through a critical phase…rightist, as well as ultra-leftist elements, are arising, *de facto*, in a united front behind the underlined its back lurk reactionary Arab countries, first of all Saudi Arabia and Egypt. [411]

5.5.4 Saudi Aversion to the EPLF

The Saudi support for reasons noted above was insignificant and inconsistent at best. Worse, Saudi Arabia demand was out of proportion to whatever help it might have ended by putting its religious tentacles into the ranks of Eritrean liberation movements. Indeed, the Saudi authorities tried to reverse an important development in the course of the struggle- the emergence of the EPLF and secular nationalism. The pan-Arab oriented wing of the Eritrean movements, notably the ELF was already weakened by inter-Arab disputes and their unreliable support. Hence, the ELF's power had been seriously dwindled to the advantage of the Marxist EPLF.[412] The EPLF might not have been hostile to conservative Arab state. However, it was clear from the EPLF's 1971 manifesto, its secular and independent stand left it unfavorable in the eyes of conservative Arab regime, especially that of the Saudi Kingdom. Because, these regimes felt that an independent stand of the organization, coupled with its secular and sociality orientations, contradicted their interests. Thus, Saudi Arabia the forefront of the conservative states vented its displeasure by restraining its support but also tried to weaken the EPLF. [413] Saudi support

[409] Roy Pateman, Even the stones are burning, p.101
[410] Henze, Paul Ethiopian Myths Rand paper 1989)
[411] CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow, 13 May 1977 Confidential On the results of the official visit to the Soviet Union of the Ethiopian State Delegation led by the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of socialist Ethiopia Mengistu Haile Mariam In the course of negotiations the Soviet leaders and Mengistu discussed the issues of bilateral relations and relevant international questions. [Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok.]
[412] Roberto Aliboni, The Red Sea Region, Local Actors and the Superpowers, 1985, p. 110.
[413] James e. Dougherty the horn of Africa: a map of political-strategic conflict special report. institute of

for the Muslim ELF became much more cordial after 1974, once it has become clear that the ELF was not only in competition with the Christian- Marxist EPLF, but it was also now fighting a radical republican regime rather than a traditional monarchy.[414] Hence, Saudi antagonism to the EPLF was as much attributed to the organization's fundamentally secular nature as to its radical-leftist stance. Such contention becomes less plausible when one realizes that the ELF, main contender of the EPLF and the more favored by the Saudis, was socialist in outlook. The reasons and reactions of the Saudi authorities to the emergence of the EPLF can be summarized by the resolution of the EPLF's Second Congress in 1987 stated, Saudi Arabia from the beginning was not happy with the independent thinking of the EPLF, "worked for the detriment of our organization". [415]

Saudi Arabia's more detrimental policy came when it threw the lot of its weight in support of a third splinter group- the ELF-RC that had little military presence in Eritrea. Thus, out of purely religious reasons, Saudi support sought to strengthen the pan-Arab Eritrean wing the ELF and especially Osman Saleh Sabbe's groups, and not the Marxist EPLF.[416] The Saudi Arabia not only financed the proliferation of various splinter organizations, it essentially fought by proxy the EPLF, which was the 'vanguard' of the struggle till victory. As noted above the ELF was driven out of Eritrea, some factions were based in the Sudan were preparing to join the EPLF. In an interview later, Idris Totil Before the groups met, Saudi officials arrived in Khartoum and summoned the leaders of each faction to consult the Hilton Hotel. The officials lectured, "The cause of your [ELF] defeat was the Christians within your organization who were accomplices of the EPLF" Saudis said, adding; "The solution lies in all the Muslims coming together now." Totil was asked to organize a new formation based upon a commitment to Islam, the Saudis told him, and they would provide the arms, the money and even the personnel in the form

foreign policy analysis, inc. the Eritrean insurrection

[414] James E. Dougherty the horn of Africa: a map of political-strategic conflict special report. institute of foreign policy analysis, inc. the Eritrean Insurrection

[415] Second Congress of EPLF resolutions, p.107.

[416] Roberto Aliboni, The Red Sea Region, Local Actors and the Superpowers, London, Croom Helm, 1985, p. 109.

of Eritrean Muslims then in Saudi Arabia. Ibrahim Totil declined the offer, though other exiles did not.[417]

Another abortive attempt to unite the other two factions was made in 1983 when a meeting was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on January 6-10, 1983 between Mr. Abdullah Idriss, leader of the Revolutionary Council and Mr. Osman Selah Sabbe of ELF-PLF. [418] The EPLF, against which the meeting was convened, was not involved in the preliminary negotiations in Jeddah. The EPLF's Deputy Secretary General Mr. Issias Afwerki in a telegram sent to Arab states a couple of weeks after the meeting, described the agreement as a 'conspiracy designed to thwart the struggle for the unity of the people of Eritrea' and claimed that it was 'part of a campaign of slander against the EPLF'.[419]

The Saudis do not want to see an independent Eritrea under the leadership of the EPLF. [420] According to internal politburo obtained by African Confidential, "Saudi Arabia is the EPLF's least favorite Arab country. It is accused of confiscating EPLF weapons, of financing rival factions, and attempting to manipulate the Eritrean conflict for its own ends. It is accused of disliking the EPLF's independent political line and ensuring of its dominance by destabilizing the others. [421] By 1987, the Saudi Arabian authorities had closed the EPLF office in Jeddah and confiscated weapons that the EPLF had purchased.[422]

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[417] Dan Connell, Against All Odds, pp. 208-209 cited from Interview by the author, November 1990. At that time, Totil was serving as the head of the EPLF'S Information Department.

[418] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 101

[419] Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1983, p.3223. Quoted in Pakistan Horizon Quarterly 3 Vol. XXXII No.3 1984 Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi The Eritrean Struggle for Emancipation, Moonis Ahmar, p.53

[420] Mordechai Abir, Oil, Power and Political Conflict in Arabia, the Red Sea and the Gulf, London, Frank Cass, 1974, p.175. in Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 101

[421] African Confidential, 20 April 1987.

[422] Abdu Rahman Babu, The Eritrean Question in the Context of African Conflicts and Superpower Rivalries. In Lionel Cliffe and Basil Davidson (eds.), The long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1988, p.55.

In October 1974, Kuwait decided to give $30,000 a year to the ELF. [423] The Arab league in Cairo not only declared that it would increase its aid to the Eritrean movement but also expressed its open willingness to raise the Eritrean case before the OAU. The Kuwaiti leaders told the Ethiopian delegation curtly: 'follow the example of Portugal…and grant independence to (Ethiopian) colonies. [424] The EPLF in its Second Unitary Congress in 1987 confirmed that Kuwait and United Arab Emirates both had been supporters of Eritrean struggle, "Kuwait stood for the just cause of Eritrea." It occasionally raised Eritrean case in the United Nations and other forums, donated humanitarian aid. Emirates also not only supported the just cause of Eritrea it also made financial commitments. It also took positive initiative of trying to unite various Eritrean movements.[425]

5.6 Somalia

5.6.1 Introduction

As previously noted, various Ethiopian rulers laid claim to the entire Horn of Africa as their 'ancestral lands'. Emperor Menelik's circular of April 1891 to European powers contending that his territories extended to Khartoum and Lake Victoria in the West, and to the sea in the east and southeast,[426] was typical of this. Emperor Haile Selassie renewed these claims on Eritrea and Somalia during the United Nations deliberations.[427] Despite his initial support for Somalia's independence,[428] as Shepherd notes he not only protested against an independent Somalia, also claimed prior control.[429] Same claim was even made all clear three years after Somalia's independence by Aklilou Habte-Weld, Ethiopian Prime Minister of the time, who indignantly claimed; "The historical frontiers

[423] Africa Report Nov.-December. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35
[424] Madan M. Sauldie, 'Super Power in the Horn of Africa' London, Oriental University Press, 1987. P.113(quoted from The Economist, London, 30.11.1974)
[425] Second Congress of EPLF resolutions, p.107.
[426] Saadia Touval, Somali Nationalism (Cambridge. Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 141
[427] Eritrea and Somalia along with Libya, as former Italian colonies, their disposition was collectively debated in the United Nations in 1947-48.
[428] Emperor, fearing the re-imposition of Italy in Somalia and hoping to incorporate it to his empire, initially Ethiopia was the only United Nations member state to support the Somali Youth league in its declared opposition to Italy and its demand for ultimate independence. John Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay, 1984, p.218 n-2.
[429] George W. Shepherd, jr. " The Trampled Grass: Tributary States and Self-reliance in the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace" Praeger New York 1987. p. 69

of Ethiopia stretched from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, including all the territory between them".[430]

Though Somalia became a republic in 1960 despite the diplomatic hurdles instigated by Ethiopia's ambitions of 'territorial aggrandizement', their business with Ethiopia was far from over. For the new Republic, as early as 1960, the 'Greater Somalia'[431] philosophy became its declared policy. This policy that entailed the unification of all Somali inhabited territories in the Horn and its first target was the *Ogaden*- the largest Somalia inhabited area outside of Somalia proper, which Ethiopia had incorporated early in the 20th centry.[432] It is this region that the Somali President Aden Abdullah Osman had in mind when he accused Ethiopia, in the 1963 OAU conference, for "Possession of a large portion of Somali territory", which he warned would "constitute a constant source of trouble in the region if not healed." [433] Late that year, a press release from Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the Somali Government for training "bandit bands led by Somalia army officers" and for supplying them with arms and other assistance,"[434] only early the next year, February 6, 1964, the border tension to erupt into open fighting.[435]

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[430] Speech in reply by Ethiopian Prime Minister, Aklilou Habte-Weld. OAU Mimeographed Text, CIAS/GEN/INF/43 Case studies in African Diplomacy:2, The Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute 1960-1967, Dar Es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.34.

[431] The Constitution of the new Somali Republic as adopted on 1 July 1960, in its first part under General Principles in Article 6 (4) states that the republic "Promote by legal and peaceful means the union of Somali territories…" Ever since its independence in 1960 Somalia pursued the policy of 'Greater Somalia' which entailed the unification of all Somali inhabited territories in neighboring countries, the most important of them been the Somali inhabited region of Ethiopia, which journalistically is referred as the Ogaden.

[432] constituted the prime target for it had incorporated during its 'southern conquest' at the end of the 19th century the largest Somali inhabited region.

[433] Speech of the Somali President, Aden Abdullah Osman, The organization of African Unity, Inaugural Summit Conference, Addis Ababa, May 1963, OAU Mimeographed Text, CIAS/GEN/INF/25. Case studies in African Diplomacy:2, The Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute 1960-1967, Dar Es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.33

[434] The Ethiopian Government Aide Memoir, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release, 14 November 1963. Case studies in African Diplomacy:2, The Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute 1960-1967, Dar Es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.41.

[435] Time 7 February 1964. Case studies in African Diplomacy:2, The Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute 1960-1967, Dar Es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.48.

5.6.2 The Strategic Alliance

It was natural for Somali governments, in a long-standing conflict with Ethiopia, not to mention their religious and ideological affinity to Eritrean nationalists, to assist the ELF establishing an office in the center of Mogadishu in early 1960's.[436] However, as often cited, the Somali-Eritrea solidarity and cooperation was not rooted in the shallow dictum '*the enemy of my enemy is my friend*'. Rather it stemmed from their strategic outlook of their respective conflicts as a 'colonial question' and the right for 'self-determination' as the ultimate solution of that conflict. It is this attitude that promoted Somalia, despite the limits of its diplomatic and material capabilities, to provide unwavering support to the Eritrean movements of all stripes and creed. Somalia was the first country to Eritrean nationalist to open office, not to mention that a Somali-Eritrean Friendship Association (SEFA) was established in 1962 even before the establishment of relations with the ELF.

In return, Eritrean nationalists had in many instances stated their stand on the Ogaden issue. The ELF leader once observed "We know that Ogaden is part and parcel of Somalia."[437] His organization in its Second Congress hailed the stand of the democratic Republic of Somalia in regard to the Eritrean Revolution and expresses its solidarity with the Somali people in their struggle for realizing the unity of their territories.[438] In the same token Somali leaders were mostly to Eritrea's independence. Obviously, the position of the Somali leadership regarding Eritrea had negative imprints on Somalia-Ethiopia relations. Soviet Foreign Ministry report on Somali-Ethiopian war states "providing support to Eritrean separatists, Somalia, to all appearances, is counting on the fact that the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia will lead to a split of the multinational Ethiopian state, which will facilitate the unification of the Ogaden territory with Somalia."[439]

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[436] providing them with an office on one of Mogadishu's main streets in a building next to the then US Embassy and across the street from the USIS premises. On one end of the same street are the Ethiopian and French Embassies. Splits within the ELF led to the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in 1970.

[437] Reports by Fulvio Grimaldi from the field in an interview with Ahmed Nasser chairman of the ELF's Revolutionary Council. The Eritrean road to Unity? The Middle East: December 1977, p.59

[438] Eritrean liberation front political program approved by the 2nd national congress of the elf liberate areas, may 22,1975, foreign political resolutions the Arab world, Somalia

[439] Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, Information Report on Somali-Ethiopian Territorial

By the waves of coups that toppled governments in late 1960s, in Yemen, Libya and Sudan, General Siad-Bare came to power in Somalia in 1969. The Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) that staged the coup 'redefined Somalia's foreign policy goals and in October 1970 described the country as a 'Socialist state".[440] Said Bare rekindled the pan-Somalia policy with an ideological charged sense as he accused Haile Selassie's 'unabashed imperialism', which led to a head-on collision with Ethiopia.

Moreover, Djibouti, which was claimed both by Somalia and Ethiopia was another issue of disagreement between these two countries. This issue came to the fore with the Ethiopian Emperor's announcement that he would take all measures necessary to regain the "lost" Ethiopian province[441] and that Ethiopia "would be the first to arrive" in Djibouti, were the inhabitants to ask for its protection.[442] The Emperor went to Paris to obtain a commitment that if France were to leave Djibouti it would transfer that Djibouti to Ethiopia.[443]

After the fall of the emperor and declaration of Ethiopia a socialist republic the hostilities did not abate. As Somalia had by then joined the Arab League in 1974 and had come increasingly under the influence of Arab states. Egypt and Saudi were the closest friends of Somalia.[444] Saudi Arabia, specifically, seeking to minimize Soviet influence in the Red Sea region, were prepared to offer her inducements to reduce her dependence on the Soviet Union. It is also well known, said Berhanu Bayeh, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Saudi Arabia is continuing to seek an end to Somalia's cooperation with the Soviet Union, including in the military area, promising in exchange to provide Somalia with the

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Disputes, 2 February 1977 SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH ETHIOPIA AND THE POSITION OF THE USSR (Brief Information Sheet)

[440] A. A. Castagno, The Horn of Africa and the Competition for Power, in Alvin J. Cottrell and R.M. Burell (ed.), The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Importance, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 158

[441] Ethiopian Herald, September 18 1966.

[442] Le Monde, October 12, 1966. Quoted in A. A. Castagno, The Horn of Africa and the Competition for Power, in Alvin J. Cottrell and R.M. Burell (ed.), The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic, and Military Importance, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 166.

[443] See Africa Quarterly, X, June-September 1970.

[444] Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa Samuel M. Makinda ST. Martin's Press NY copy 1987, p.39

necessary assistance.[445] Indeed, Saudi Arabia contributed over $300 million in a successful attempt to get Somalia to sever its military alliance with the Soviet Union. [446]

During the mid and late seventies, several EPLF delegations visited Mogadishu to open a mission and to consolidate EPLF-Somali relations. Some members of the Siad military government preferred the ELF. Obviously, this was partly because the EPLF elements gave them the impression that it was a "Muslim" organization. The small but active Somali "left" intelligentsia rallied around the EPLF and stood behind its negotiations with the head of the Somali National Security Service and other concerned organs of the Somali ruling party and Government. The EPLF did get the recognition it sought and was even able to inherit the former ELF premises in Mogadishu. Information reached Somalia showed that, apart from a few vocal leaders in Arab capitals, the ELF was practically without strong bases in Eritrea itself. Somalia-EPLF relations would later hit the ground only during the Ogaden war, which the Somalia leadership helped spark and has disastrous consequences for Eritrea and Somalia and the region at large.

5.6.3 The Ogaden War and Eritrea

The Ethiopian-Somali war of 1977-78 soured relations between the Somali Government and Eritrean movements. The Eritreans fully supported the efforts of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). There was good political coordination with the WSLF, but for geographical reasons there was not such coordination at military level. They offered the WSLF various aspects of their richer guerrilla war experience. EPLF leader Issias Afwerki visited the area in 1977 and cautioned against using the Somali National Army in the area.[447] He reasoned that such a top-down militarist approach will undermine the

[445] Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Acting Charge d'affaires in Ethiopia S. Sinitsin and Ethiopian official Maj. Berhanu Bayeh,18 March 1977 TOP SECRET Copy No. 2 From the journal of 30 March 1977 SINITSIN, S.Ia. Issue No. 124 RECORD OF CONVERSATION with the member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC Major BERHANU BAYEH 18 March 1977 This evening I visited Berhanu Bayeh in the office of the PMAC at his request. Referring to an instruction of the leadership of the PMAC, he informed me for transmission to Moscow of the following.

[446] Peter Vanneman and Martinn James, Soviet Thrust into the Horn of Africa: the next targets Strategic Review ,Vol. VI NO.2 ,Spring 1978 (A quarterly publication US Strategic Institute Washington DC, P.39

447 This is a "strategic" form of assistance, according to Professor Bereket Habte Sellassie, the UN

WSLF and herald in massive foreign interventionism. Unfortunately, beginning in May-June 1977, the Somalia military regime launched a tremendous offensive intended to regain "Western Somalia" (the Ogaden region). And, as predicted by the Eritrean leader, foreign involvement in Ethiopia, and consequently Eritrea, underwent a major transformation with the introduction of large scale Soviet and Cuban presence in the area.

Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Cuba and abrogated its Friendship Treaty with the USSR as it sought a new alliance with the USA. Again, as predicted, this had dire consequences on the Eritrean struggle. Although the Ogaden Campaign did create a temporary Ethiopian diversion away from Eritrea, allowing the liberation fronts to consolidate some important gains, the broader effect of the massive foreign assistance has meant an increased number of Eritrean casualties, both military and civilian.[448] However, the disciplined Eritrean movements refrained from openly criticizing the Somalis. The EPLF is a mature and sophisticated organization that utilizes class analysis to plan its strategy. The EPLF knew that the Siad regime was a brutal dictatorship and were not taken by surprise with its military solution to the question of self-determination in the Ogaden; nor were they taken by surprise when Siad implored Mengistu to sign a mutual peace treaty in 1988. It was only due to greater political understanding and tolerance on the part of the Eritrea that relations between Somalis and Eritreans did not become damaged beyond repair.

Arab reaction supports and heats up the aspirations of the Somalis, with the goal of putting pressure on the progressive Ethiopian leadership. According to a West German magazine *Stern*, the United States has offered the Somalis a list of $1.2 billion worth of arms that can be acquired from NATO reserves. Saudi Arabia will pay for these deliveries.[449] President of Somalia Siad intends in the beginning of 1977 to complete a trip to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and several other Arab

representative for the EPLF. He expressed this view during an interview conducted during the African Studies Association meeting in St. Louis, November 23, 1991.

448 Ibid

449 The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXX, No.3, p.12, Pravda, jan. 14, p.5 and Tass Jan. 13, US Arms Shipments to Somalia Reported.

countries. As he left in January 1977 for Khartoum to prepare for this visit, Member of the Politburo of the CC of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party [Ahmed] Suleiman [Abdullah] public expressed himself in vulgar anti-Ethiopian thrusts. Suleiman openly spoke out in support of the Eritrean separatists, and also in favor of a proposal to move the headquarters of the OAU from Addis Ababa to another capital, a proposal for which Sudan and several African countries with a pro-Western orientation recently expressed support.[450] We are not organizing, said Mengistu, partisan movements in Somalia, although specific opportunities for that have presented themselves and continue to do so. At the same time, representations of Eritrean organizations have been established in Mogadishu, along with other anti Dergue factions.[451] Responding to the Soviet remarks concerning statements of certain Somali statesmen in Sudan, President Siad alleged that member of the Politburo CC SRSP Suleiman had only expressed an opinion on the situation in Ethiopia, and that Minister of Public Health Rabile Gad was just giving his personal views, and that his statement was, allegedly, provoked by the Sudanese. The main threat to Ethiopia was arising from Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya, not from the SDR, emphasized the President. Siad reportedly said, the internal reaction, represented by the Ethiopian Democratic Union headquartered in London and supported by the CIA, was carefully preparing a broad terrorist campaign against the leadership of the PMAC and against other progressive Ethiopian leaders. Siad denied the information that special units trained in the Somali territory, which also included Somali servicemen, were being transferred to the Ogaden. The SDR was not going to start a war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden, stressed the President. Such a conflict would be detrimental to both countries. Only imperialists and the Arab reactionaries would win in such a case. We understand this very well, said Siad. However, we will support the struggle for unification with the Fatherland the people of Somalia would not understand its leaders if

[450] Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, Information Report on Somali-Ethiopian Territorial Disputes, 2 February 1977 SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH ETHIOPIA AND THE POSITION OF THE USSR (Brief Information Sheet)

[451] Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Mengistu, 29 July 1977 TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From diary of 9 August 1977 A. P. RATANOV Ser. No. 276 NOTES OF CONVERSATION with Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia HAILE MARIAM MENGISTU 29 July 1977We received a visit from Mengistu and transmitted to him a message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev in response to a communication from Mengistu, which was presented to Comrade Brezhnev for Comrade A. P. Kirilenko by the General Secretary of the PMAC, Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

they were to suppress their struggle for liberation from the Ethiopian colonial yoke.[452] Exchange of opinions revealed that the Somali leadership adheres to its old positions regarding its territorial demands on Ethiopia. Siad Barre justified this stand [by referring] to the pressure of internal nationalistic circles of Somalia. [453]

At the meeting Siad declared that if the socialist countries would not support Somalia on the territorial issue, then he would be required to appeal to Arab and Western states for assistance.[454] The Somali Democratic Republic (SDR) has, in a statement broadcast from Mogadishu on 4 February 1982, condemned "the inhumane massacre unleashed by the Ethiopian colonial regime on the Eritrean masses struggling for their national independence and freedom." Speaking at a press conference in the Somali capital, the SDR Foreign Affairs Minister Challe Abdurahan Jama Barre declared that Ethiopian regime is backed by foreign forces, including Libya, Cuba and South Yemen, in its acts of genocide against the people of Eritrea.[455] Late next year (December 1983), Somalia's President Siad Barre took his own initiative and hosted another unity meeting; at the end

[452] Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Somalia G.V. Samsonov and Somali President Siad Barre, 23 February 1977 EMBASSY OF THE USSR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA From the journal of Secret. Copy No. 2 G.V. SAMSONOV Orig. No. 101 11 March 1977 NOTES FROM CONVERSATION with President of the Democratic Republic of Somalia MOHAMMED SIAD BARRE 23 February 1977 Today I was received by President Siad. In accordance with my orders I informed him about the considerations of the Soviet leaders, and Comrade Brezhnev personally, concerning the situation developing around Ethiopia. AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE SDR /G. SAMSONOV/ [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1621, ll. 10-14; translation by S. Savranskaya.]

[453] Report from CPSU CC to SED CC, Results of N.V. Podgorny's Visit to Africa, late March 1977 (excerpts) Strictly confidential On the results of an official visit of N.V. PODGORNY to Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and also of an unofficial visit to Somalia and a meeting with the leaders of the national-liberation organizations of the South of Africa that took place in Lusaka on 28 March [1977] [Received on 19 April 1977] [Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202 584; obtained and translated from Russian by V. Zubok.]

[454] Additions to 2 February 1977 Report by Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, on "Somalia's Territorial Disagreements with Ethiopia and the Position of the USSR," apparently in late May-early June 1977 [...] On 16 March 1977, a meeting took place in Aden between President Siad and PMAC Chairman Mengistu with the participation of Fidel Castro and the Chairman of the Presidential Council of South Yemen, Rubayi-i-Ali. [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1619, ll. 61-68; translated by Paul Henze.]

[455] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.17.

of which Radio Mogadishu announced (29 Dec.1983) that complete agreement had been reached. But this claim of success was not borne out by subsequent developments.[456]

It was in the Horn of Africa that Soviet military involvement crate shock waves that threatened détente. From the beginning of the year 1977 and estimated 20,000 Cuban troops, 3,000 Soviet military technicians and about $2 billion in arms flowed into Ethiopia. A vast infusion of Cuban troops and Soviet materiel enabled the Ethiopians to route the Somali army out of the Ogaden province.[457] Because, the USSR was helping to 'defend Ethiopia's territorial integrity', the US was left without an appropriate countermove except to urge restraint and to warn off an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia proper. Somalia's 'irredentist designs' crippled the US from throwing the lot of is political and military weight behind that country's cause, hence it shifted the locus of its war effort to Eritrea. Eritrea seemed the main obstacle to the consolidation of the country's 'Marxist-Leninist revolution'.[458] American outrage at what was deemed to be Soviet transgression of the ground rules of the détente was expressed by the then American National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who warned the Soviet-Cuba activities in Ethiopia could jeopardize SALT agreement. The president of the United States threatened that abandonment of the deemphasizing the Cold War in Africa.[459]

5.7 Libya and South Yemen

5.7.1 Introduction

South Yemen and Libya, adversely their geographical distance from one another, that the latter is a non-Red Sea state, for the sake of this report, are grouped together owing to the similar pattern of their intervention in Eritrea. Socialist ideological affiliation was the most highly probable *raison d'être* for the two regimes support to Eritrean struggle and probably the same reason that drove these two countries later to line up with socialist Ethiopia after 1976.

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[456] Colin Legum (ed.) Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey Documents 1983-1984, African Publishing Company, New York, p.B133
[457] Legum, op cit., p.635.
[458] Loc cit.
[459] Ibid., p.636.

At the commencement of Eritrea's struggle in 1961, South Yemen was a British colony (Aden Crown Colony) while a king ruled in Tripoli. Subsequent to a violent struggle, South Yemen won its independence in 1967 under the National Liberation Front, which two years later in 1969 declared the country a "People's Republic".[460] Yemeni leaders indebted to Eritrea's previous 'firm fraternal support' to their cause, "officially declared" solidarity to Eritrea [461] and gave 'unconditional support'. [462] Parallel to this, in September same year Colonel Muamar al-Gaddafi assumed power by toppling King Idris Al-Senussi, the first and last monarch of Libya (1951-1969. Gaddafi, when approached by Eritrean nationalists, 'declared his solidarity' with the Eritrean revolution and became an 'outspoken supporter' that extended 'considerable material' and diplomatic assistance.[463] The bulk of Libyan support was transferred to Eritrea through the PDRY. [464] While the oil rich Libya provided the money and other provisions, [465] South Yemen, that controls the exit of the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean[466] and is less than 32 miles across the sea to Eritrea, mostly served as a 'transit enterpot'. [467] When Kamaran was occupied by the Yemen Arab Republic during the fighting of the autumn of 1972, a cache of arms, made in Russia, paid for by Libya and sent there for transhipment to the Eritreans by the PDRY, was found.[468]

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[460] Ferenc Vali, Politics of the Indian Ocean Region: The Balances of Power, New York, The Free Press, 1976, p.138.

[461] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.13.

[462] Yohannes , op. cit., P.253.

[463] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.13. Aryeh Yodfat, The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa: Part I, Northeast African Studies, vol. 1 No. 3, 1979-1980, p.11. Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 99. Okbazghi Yohannes, Eritrea: A Pawn in World Politics, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991, P.253.

[464] Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, p.61

[465] Africa Report Nov.-December. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35

[466] The South Yemeni Island of Perim, divides the 12 miles wide Bab el Mandeb in two Ras (Capes), Ras Bab el Mandeb the narrow passage on the Arabian side and Ras Si Ane on the African coast, the larger and deeper passage and frequently used one. Ferenc Vali, Politics of the Indian Ocean Region: The Balances of Power, New York, The Free Press, 1976, p.138.

[467] Okbazghi Yohannes, Eritrea: A Pawn in World Politics, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991, P.253. Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 99.

[468] Robin Bidwell, The Two Yemens, Longman Westview Press, 1983, p.290.

5.7.2 Imperial Ethiopia

Radical Arab nationalist grouping has led South Yemen ever since its establishment as an independent state in November 1967.[469] PDRY's growing socialist policies and its stature as a Soviet foothold in the Arabian Peninsula[470] compounded by its support to Ethiopia and avowal to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which run against majority Arab opinion, effectively isolated it to a socialist outcast of the region. Even relations with Libya and Iraq, its principal allies, were variable at best.

Fred Halliday noted the overall PDRY's official policy on the Horn of Africa was one of "caution and silence."[471] The Yemenis despite their open but not official support for Eritrea's independence they were careful not to make it official. Hence, the final resolutions of the Fourth and Fifth Congresses (1968 and1972 respectively), fell mentioning any particular movement except calling for 'self-determination for national minorities'[472] and reiterating its 'support for liberation movements'.[473] It has been claimed that the PDRY helped to build up the ELF and then attempted to take control of it during 1970-1971.[474] At the time of the Fifth Congress, the PDRY which had been inclined to the Chinese model, relations went sour as China established diplomatic relations with Haile Selassie and withdrawn its support for Eritreans. [475] Because, Addis Ababa while 'full diplomatic relations' is kept with the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) maintained not diplomatic but only consular ties with Aden.[476] Ethiopian

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[469] Fred Halliday, Revolution and Foreign Policy; The case of South Yemen 1967-1987, Cambridge Middle East Library:21, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.20.Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, p.61

[470] J. E. Peterson when explaining Yemen's dependence on the Eastern bloc, he noted 'Ideology, regional isolation and extreme underdevelopment are the principal reasons for the PRDY's dependence on the Soviet Union and other communist bloc nations.' J. E. Peterson, The Two Yemens and the International Impact of Inter-Yemen Relations, Paper presented to conference on "The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a Strategic Arena" Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 14-16 October 1982, p. 30.

[471] Fred Halliday, Revolution and Foreign Policy; The case of South Yemen 1967-1987, Cambridge Middle East Library:21, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.74.

[472] Fred Halliday, Revolution and Foreign Policy; The case of South Yemen 1967-1987, Cambridge Middle East Library:21, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.26.

[473] Helen Lackner, P.D.R. Yemen; Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, P.66.

[474] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 101

[475] Helen Lackner, P.D.R. Yemen; Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, P.67.

[476] Ferenc Vali, Politics of the Indian Ocean Region: The Balances of Power, New York, The Free Press,

officials were also believed to have threatened the South Yemenis with expulsion of their sizeable community in Ethiopia if they continued to help the ELF.[477] The Second National Congress of the ELF hails the Political Organization-National Front-and the progressive regime in the Democratic Republic of Yemen for their stands in supporting the struggle of the Eritrean People, despite the difficult circumstances surrounding them.[478]

Similarly, Avaraham Sela attributes Libya's support to Eritrea to Libya's 'hyper-nationalist policies against Israel' in its attempt as a 'peripheral actor' in a bid to enhance its own prestige by demonstrating active involvement in the Palestine conflict.[479] This attitude was further sanctioned by Libya's dedication to pan-Arabism and Islamic solidarity. Quaddafi's ardent opposition to pro-West and anything even remotely pro-Israel and in conjunction with his competition for Haile Selassie's position as an African leader, promoted him to take the Eritreans from the start as allies. Probably, in an effort to emphasize Libya's support to Eritrea Haggai Erlich mentions 'Italian imperialism', which both were victims to Qaddafi's 'special sympathy' for the Eritreans. However, the historical discontinuity makes this contention less relevant. The Second National Congress of the EFL hails the stand of the Libyan Arab Republic in supporting the Eritrean Revolution and all International Liberation Movements. The Congress also hails the nationalization of the most important monopolistic petroleum companies which is a considerable achievement towards emancipation from imperialist domination.[480]

Libya, to undermine and partly to exert pressure on Haile Selassie to sever relations with Israel started to support. Libya particularly became the main source of finances and arms

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1976, p.131.

[477] Godfrey Morrison, Minority Right Group, Report No.5, October 1971, p.36.

[478] Eritrean liberation front political program approved by the 2nd national congress of the elf liberate areas, may 22,1975, foreign political resolutions the Arab world, on D.R. Yemen.

[479] Avraham Sela, The Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Middle East Politics and the quest for Regional Order, New York, State University Press NY Press, 1998, P.16

[480] Eritrean liberation front political program approved by the 2nd national congress of the elf liberate areas, may 22,1975, foreign political resolutions the Arab world, Libya

for the EPLF following anti-Eritrean change in the Sudanese policy.[481] In Africa itself, Libya has during the last two years or three years started to play a major part Colonel Qaddafi further beleaguered Ethiopia to severe links with Israel, by calling in May 1973 for the boycott of the OAU's tenth anniversary summit in Addis Ababa and demanded that the headquarters of the OAU be removed from Addis Ababa. In May same year Gaddafi summoned Mr. Osman Saleh Sabbe, representative of Eritrean movements, where the Libyan leader promised apparently for the supply of no less than 150 tons of arms and ammunition, by the end of August and a dispatch of a smaller consignment of six tons of supplies early in June. [482] In the past Libyan government had supported the Eritrean nationalists and have even helped to finance the attack on Asmara in January 1975 with $ 4 Million contribution. [483]

5.7.3 Revolutionary Ethiopia

The 1974 coup in Ethiopia gave much hope of the peaceful ending of Eritrea's question. However, with the triumph of the radicals within the Dergue, which continued Haile Selassie's' old imperial tactics with a new socialist twist, the hopes for peaceful resolution vanished. The Dergue changed its foreign policy orientation, from pro-West to the East, the resort to a military solution to Eritrea's problem remained unchanged, which was detrimental to the Eritrean the struggle was detrimental to Eritrea in various ways. Internally, the reluctance of the West to give military and economic assistance caused the junior military rulers (the Dergue) to become more allied to the East. This among other things, not only many of the traditional supporters of Eritrea defected to the Ethiopian side worse they shared the division of labor of intervention against it. "In this regard the activities of Libya, South Yemen, East Germany, and Cuba were particularly notable."[484]

The Soviets who were seeking simultaneously to retain their substantial investment in Somalia and to promote their interests in Ethiopia and Eritrea initially favored a

[481] Quoted in Haggai Erlich, The Struggle Over Eritrea, p.61
[482] Ian Greig, 'The Communist Challenge to Africa: An Analysis of Contemporary Soviet, Chinese and Cuban Policies', South African Freedom Foundation, Cape Town, Cape &Trasvaal Printers (Pty.), 1977, p.182.
[483] Marina Ottaway, Soviet and American Influence in the Horn of Africa, New York, Praeger, 1982, p.113.
[484] Yohannes , op. cit., P.253.

negotiated settlement within the 'socialist framework' to the problems. Thus, the quest for a negotiated solution was entrusted to the East Germans and Cuba, which also equally shared Soviet views. The East German leader Erich Honecker made the first attempt to broker political solution to Eritrea-Ethiopia dispute by inviting both parties to Berlin in January 1978. To reiterate the USSR stance, Honecker confided with Isaias Afwerki, then EPLF's deputy Secretary General, that the Germans were 'deeply interested' in the success of the Ethiopian Revolution and in the objectives of the Eritrean movements. [485] Similarly, in February 1978, Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez having stated previous Cuban support to Eritreans against the Imperial regime, called for a 'political solution' and invited talks between Eritrea and the Dergue.[486]

In the meantime, Fidel Castro was also trying to mediate between Ethiopia and Somalia. Castro having briefly visited both 'socialist countries' on 14 and 15 March 1977, the next day organized a secret meeting in Aden. In this summit whereby Ethiopia's Mengistu, Somalia's Siad Barre, and PDRY President Salim Ali Robayya attended Castro tabled a proposal for the establishment of a 'socialist confederation', whereby Eritrea would participate as an autonomous entity. Both Ethiopia and Somalia rejected the proposal. Ethiopia did not accept an arrangement in which Eritrea is an autonomous part.[487] Somali president Siad Bare rejected Castro's initiative because of the need first to settle Somalia's 'national problem' and the obstinacy of 'Abyssinian colonialism'.[488] A mediating committee of Yemen, Libya and Sudan failed to convince the Ethiopian regime of neither the legitimate rights of the Eritrean people to self-determination nor the

[485] Memorandum of a Conversation between East German leader Erich Honecker and Isaias Afwerki, General Secretary of the Revolutionary Party of Eritrea, in Berlin, 31 January 1978 (dated 3 February 1978) Honecker: [Welcoming remarks] [Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]

[486] STRATEGIC REVIEW VOL. VI SPRING 1978 NO.2 (A quarterly publication US Strategic Institute Washington DC.) SOVIEY THRUST INTO THE HORN OF AFRICA: THE NEXT TARGETS PETER VANNEMAN and MARTINN JAMES Washington Post, January 16, 1978; " the Horn of Africa: Breakthrough," The Economist, march 11, 1978; " Cubans turn now to Eritrean Rebels," Christian Science Monitor, March 28, 1978. p.40

[487] Superpower Diplomacy in the Horn of Africa Samuel M. Makinda ST. Martin's Press NY copy 1987, p.111

[488] strategic survey 1977 IISS London the horn of Africa (pp.16)

viability of regional autonomy.[489] Muhammad Salih Mutiyya, PDRY Foreign Minister stated "The Eritrean Revolution must not be an obstacle to the Ethiopian revolution as a whole". The Minister who called for a negotiated settlement of the dispute, pledged his support for Eritrea's independence if the Ethiopians agree.[490]

When those attempts failed mainly because of Ethiopia's intransigence, the Eritreans took the blame. Thus, the Soviet Union, which had supported Eritrea's independence, and allegedly extended material support through third party countries, opposed it. *Pravda* explicitly proclaimed that Eritrean secession would amount to a "victory for imperialism." [491] After the revolution in Ethiopia, the Soviet interest was to use 'Ethiopia's great revolutionary potential to free Africa from the influence of the USA and of the Chinese' and to create a great counterweight to Egypt's betrayal'. [492] Mengistu in his visit to Moscow told his Soviet counterpart that the Eritrean revolution acquired a 'reactionary character' after the victory of the 'national-democratic revolution in Ethiopia'. [493] Fidel Castro, owing to the support of the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to Eritrea, though said there were 'progressive people' in the struggle; he accused them for playing a 'reactionary' role. [494]

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[489] Eritrea Africa's Longest War: David Pool Anti-slavery Society Human Rights Series Report No.3-1980, London P.58

[490] Fred Halliday, Revolution and Foreign Policy; The case of South Yemen 1967-1987, Cambridge Middle East Library:21, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.240.

[491] Peter Vanneman and Martinn James, Soviet Thrust into the Horn of Africa: the next targets Strategic Review ,Vol. VI NO.2 ,Spring 1978 (A quarterly publication US Strategic Institute Washington DC, p.33.P.36

[492] Transcript of Meeting between East German leader Erich Honecker and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, East Berlin, 3 April 1977 (excerpts) Minutes of the conversation between Comrade Erich Honecker and Comrade Fidel Castro, Sunday, 3 April 1977 between 11:00 and 13:30 and 15:45 and 18:00, House of the Central Committee, Berlin. [remainder of conversation omitted--ed.][Source: Stiftung "*Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen* DDR im Bundesarchiv" (Berlin), DY30 JIV 2/201/1292; document obtained by Christian F. Ostermann and translated by David Welch with revisions by Ostermann.]

[493] CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow, 13 May 1977 Confidential On the results of the official visit to the Soviet Union of the Ethiopian State Delegation led by the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of socialist Ethiopia Mengistu Haile Mariam In the course of negotiations the Soviet leaders and Mengistu discussed the issues of bilateral relations and relevant international questions. [Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

[494] Transcript of Meeting between East German leader Erich Honecker and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, East Berlin, 3 April 1977.

In May 1976 Russia, probably to exert pressure on the guerrillas to be more compromising in the planned peace talks, is said to have pressured the PDRY to stop any further supply of arms to the Eritrean nationalists. Robayya changed tone express support for Ethiopia's military regime by declaring that Aden would "struggle by the side of Ethiopia in the case of any threat to the Ethiopian revolution." [495] Premier Ali Nasser Muhammad flew to Moscow in early February for special talks with Soviet leaders. Ali Nasser took a public position concurring with the Soviets that Eritreans and the Somalis "played into the hands of imperialism." He pledged his country's respect for Ethiopia's territorial integrity and agreed to make every contribution to its struggle against Eritrea and Somalia. [496] By 1979 the PDRY's President opposed 'any movement aimed at expansion or separation' and the PDRY was 'for unity of nationalities in the Horn of Africa.'[497] This was followed by the expected closure of Eritrean movements' office in Aden.[498] Accordingly, South Yemen claims that the Eritrean revolution has, by opposing the progressive Ethiopian regime, become a puppet of imperialism and the Eritrean cause turned unjust.[499]

The PDRY, which had been a major base for the Eritrean movements till a little after the coup in Ethiopia, in a dramatic turn forged an exceptionally close relations with Ethiopia, which in May 1977 she was cited by Ethiopia's leader Lieutenant- Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam as Ethiopia's only friend in the area. [500] The Yemenis who saw particularly Somali problem as a 'clear breach of the OAU's principle of the sanctity of colonial borders' took it as an opportunity to show their practical solidarity with the Ethiopian regime.[501] In this regard the PDRY sent weapons and military personnel to Ethiopia. [502]

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[495] Robin Bidwell, The Two Yemens, Longman Westview Press, 1983, p.291. Okbazghi Yohannes, Eritrea: A Pawn in World Politics, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1991, P.253
[496] Yohannes , op. cit., P.253.
[497] See Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, The Ethiopian Revolution, NLB, London, 1981, p.235
[498] Keesings Contemporary Archives, July 1, 1977, p.18421
[499] Liberation Eritrea, op. cit., P.14.
[500] International Herald Tribune, Paris, 17.5.1978. In Madan M. Sauldie, 'Super Power in the Horn of Africa' London, Oriental University Press, 1987. P.133
[501] Helen Lackner, P.D.R. Yemen; Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, P.103.

Fikre Selassie-Wolderess "I want to express, deep gratitude to the PDRY…for the revolutionary support they have given us."[503] The excellent relations with Ethiopia were shown in various cooperation agreements and symbolically in a plot of agricultural land given by Ethiopia to the PDRY.[504]

Similarly as the South Yemenis, possibly with Soviet pressure, Libya agreed in 1976 to withdraw its support for nationalist. It was a great setback to the Eritrean movement when Libya, previously an indispensable ally announced at a 38-nation Muslim conference in Tripoli in May 1977, it had shifted its support to Ethiopia against the Eritreans. Late that year, Muamar Qaddafi to symbolize his commitment extended to Mengistu $150 million in outright grants to be used for the suppression of Eritrean nationalism. [505]The Libyan leader even dared to Eritreans to lay down their arms and give up their struggle. The justification for this call was: that Emperor Haile Selassie had gone, because 65% Ethiopians are Muslims and that the revolution had brought 'justice and equality.' [506] Col. Gaddafi in his bid to win the support of the conference emphasized the Islamic nature of the Eritrean struggle, he then stated that the Eritrean Moslem religion overtone to win the support of the conference. He stated that Eritrean Muslims were 'a drop in the sea' when compared with Moslems majority of Ethiopia whose rights had been safeguarded by the revolution.[507] Indeed, the EPLF reply to the Libyan adventure was "concerning the new self- exposing Libyan stand, however, we have nothing to add beyond stating that the Eritrean question is not the cause of Moslems or Christians but that of the entire Eritrean people constituted of different religious and

[502] Soviet Foreign Ministry and CPSU CC International Department, Background Report on the Somali-Ethiopian Conflict, 3 April 1978 Secret, Copy No. 3 Issue 164/3afo IV.03.78 ABOUT THE SOMALIA-ETHIOPIA CONFLICT (Information Sheet) Third African Department MFA USSR [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1175, ll. 13-23; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]

[503] The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, October, 11 1978, Vol. XXX, No.37, p.10, Friendship is strengthening and developing, Pravda and Izvestia, September 12, p. 4, 1978 speech by Fikre Selassie Wogderes, Ethiopian Foreign Minister.

[504] Helen Lackner, P.D.R. Yemen; Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, P.97.

[505] Yohannes , op. cit., P.253.

[506] Madan M. Sauldie, 'Super Power in the Horn of Africa' London, Oriental University Press, 1987. P.126

[507] Liberation Eritrea, a bi-monthly published Journal by the EPLF's Central Bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, Beirut Lebanon, p.15

nationalities…"[508] Gaddafi, who had scores to settle with Ja'afar Al-Numeiry of the Sudan, asked the Ethiopian government to allow him to use Ethiopian territories to stage for subversive activities against Numeiry. It is recalled that Numeiry blamed the communist attempted coup of July 1976, on Libya and Ethiopia with the Soviets in the background.[509]

The Aden tripartite meeting was organized funded and guided by the Russian government. The meeting was attended by Libya, the PDRY and Ethiopian regime. They were called together to (among other things) … do away with the so-called Eritrean problem. [510] In January 1980 Ali Antary went to Addis Ababa and signed a defence agreement with Colonel Mengistu and Mengistu went to Aden in November and further cooperation was signed.[511] Uundoubtedly Ethiopia and Yemen commitment to the tripartite alliance with Libya was partly driven by economic motive- the need for aid and cheap oil supplies from Libya. Hence, Libya agreed to supply all Aden's oil needs for the years 1980-1981[512] and for Ethiopia the next year. The other reason was based on reaction to perceived increases in hostility from an alliance of Western and conservative Gulf states more specifically as a response to the formation of the Gulf- Cooperation Council.[513] It was not long before this uneasy alliance went in disarray when relations between Libya and its partners deteriorated in 1983. In 1984 Libya cut off development aid and tried to sponsor opposition to the Presidency of Ali Nasser over disagreements concerning the Palestine issue where Libya expected the PDRY to follow its lead.[514] And alleged attempts to assists Moslem populations in Ethiopia in 1983 leads to conflict with

[508] Liberation Eritrea, op. cit.,P.15.
[509] Colin Legume and Bill Lee, Conflict in the Horn of Africa, Africa Publishing Company New York 1977,p.113
[510] Liberation Eritrea, op. cit., p.18.
[511] Robin Bidwell, The Two Yemens, Longman Westview Press, 1983, p.333.
[512] African Contemporary Records Annual Survey and Documents 1981-1982, Ethiopia: Revolution in Need of New Friends, p. B150. Robin Bidwell, The Two Yemens, Longman Westview Press, 1983, p.333.
[513] J. E. Peterson, The Two Yemens and the International Impact of Inter-Yemen Relations, Paper presented to conference on "The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a Strategic Arena" Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 14-16 October 1982, p. 29.
[514] Helen Lackner, P.D.R.Yemen; Outpost of Socialist Development in Arabia, London, Ithaca Press, 1985, P.97.

col. Mengistu.[515] An EPLF spokesman said in Paris on 15 January 1982 that 90,000 Ethiopian troops had been deployed in Eritrea, backed by arms and advisers from the USSR, financial support from Libya and naval and helicopter units from South Yemen.[516]

We believe that the support of South Yemen and later of Libya for the Eritrean revolution was neither fortuitous nor sentimental. Rather the support of these two countries and the other forces that have not wavered in their position to this day is the deserved support that the Eritrea people have won on the basis of the knowledge and recognition of their cause.[517] As a struggling people who respect themselves and their cause, we thank Libya, as we also thank South Yemen, for its previous stand in support of the Eritrean revolution. [518]

5.8 Syria and Iraq

5.8.1 Introduction

Iraq and Syria were early supporters of the armed struggle. As the logic and patterns of intervention of Ba'athist Iraq and Syria were essentially the same, they have been put together under this sub-heading. Hence, the interventions of these two have been discussed in light of the tenets of their ideology and their mutual rivalry for regional leadership and its consequences in the internal political dynamics of the struggle.

The search for support abroad bore first-fruit when the regime headed by General Amin el-Hafiz came to power in Syria, in March 1963, with strong Ba'ath party support. Maps produced in Arab countries included Eritrea as part and parcel of the Arab home land which the Ba'ath self designated to free from foreign occupation. Obviously, one such

[515] Temesgen Haile, ELF foreign relations representative 1976-1982 interviewed Washington, D.C. March- April, 1991)
[516] African Contemporary Records Annual Survey and Documents 1981-1982, Ethiopia: Revolution in Need of New Friends, p. B157.
[517] Liberation Eritrea, a bi-monthly published Journal by the EPLF's Central Bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, Beirut Lebanon, p.13
[518] Liberation Eritrea, op. cit.,P.15.

map, printed in Syria was reproduced in the Ethiopian Herald, Addis Ababa, and 3 September 1967.[519]

The Ba'ath party was founded as a pan-Arab organization for which the boundaries between Arab states were essentially artificial divisions, and it was to be the Party's task to remove these boundaries and eventually to reunite the Arabs within a single political entity. Thus Ba'athist ideology always refers to the ensemble of the Arab countries as the 'Arab homeland' (*al-watan al-arabi*), and to each Arab country as a region (*qutr*) of the homeland.[520] The Ba'ath Party ruled Iraq and Syria. Despite the fact that both countries espoused similar ideologies and contrary to the expectations that they would be 'natural' allies in the region, they remained constantly at loggerheads. In fact, they were the principal rivals to one another. [521] Thus, their relations from 1968 to1980 were never particularly cordial and were in fact more often-downright hostile.[522]

There was no ideological disagreement between the two Ba'ath parties. [523] Partly radicalization of the Ba'ath is justified by the 'ideological *non sequitur* posed by the existence of another Ba'athist regime in Syria, with which it was in 'profound conflict'. In this situation, the Iraqi Ba'ath was more or less forced to try to outbid the Syrians in its efforts to appear more truly Arab and more truly nationalist-or perhaps 'more truly Ba'athist'- than they. [524] In the course of the early 1970s the Iraqi Ba'ath acquired the maverick reputation in Middle Eastern politics that it took many years to shake off. Part of the explanation for this lay in its apparently determined adoption of a particularly hard line on the Arab-Israeli conflict, its close relations with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries between 1969 and 1973 and its militant declarations on Arab socialism and Arab unity.

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[519] Markakis, p. n284.
[520] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship, London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1990, p.202.
[521] Sluglett and Sluglett, op. cit., p.201.
[522] Sluglett and Sluglett, op. cit.,, p.202.
[523] Sluglett and Sluglett, op. cit.,, p.203.
[524] Sluglett and Sluglett, op. cit.,,, p.177.

In addition, with Egypt's gradual withdrawal from the main stream of Arab politics under Sadat, the 'struggle for Syria'[525] that had been conducted by Egypt and Iraq at various times in the 1950s and the early 1960s receded into the background in the 1970s and was replaced by a bitter rhetorical battle for ideological legitimacy between the two rival Ba'ath factions in Damascus and Baghdad.[526] Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem in November 1977 brought about both opportunities and challenges for Iraqi-Syrian relations. These two, which had never enjoyed cordial relations, were obliged to at least to make public profession of some form of solidarity against Sadat. This also brought about the competition for temptation to fill up the leadership vacuum, which both were the main contenders.

5.8.2 Eritrea and the Ba'athist Iraq and Syria

The Ba'athists successfully staged coups in Syria in March 1963 and in Iraq in July 1968. Romodan admits that the ousted regimes in both countries had shown readiness to support Eritreans. However, before anything was done those regimes were ousted. Thus, Syria and Iraq started to extend their support from after the Ba'athist takeovers. The ELF's most significant Middle Eastern backer was Syria. Three months after the Ba'ath officers' coup an ELF office was opened in Damascus and Osman Saleh Sabbe began to make radio broadcasts attacking Ethiopian policies in Eritrea. In 1964 20 rifles were supplied to the ELF, which had 250 guerrillas. [527]

Following the dissolution in 1961 of the union with Egypt in the United Arab Republic, Syria entered a period of intense competition with its erstwhile partner, and the steadfast support it offered the nationalists in Eritrea was partly motivated by this rivalry for regional influence. This contest was later to be joined by Iraq, when this country fell out with both Syria and Egypt. Additional motivations was provided by the pan-Arab vision of Ba'ath ideology animating political forces in Syria and Iraq, which apparently came to

[525] Patrick Seale, The Struggle for Syria; A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1946-1958, London, Oxford University Press, 1965, p.313.
[526] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship, London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1990, p.177.
[527] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 98

embrace Eritrea as well, as maps printed in Syria showed. The most important reason, however, was geopolitical one, with the mortal Arab-Israeli struggle at the center. The patronage of the United States drew Ethiopia inexorable into an ill-concealed alliance with Israel, and the latter was assumed a leading role in the war against Eritrean nationalism. In 1963, thirty Eritreans mostly students in Egypt, were sent to Syria for several months' military training. Among them was Romodan Mohammed Nur, a former student of Sabbe at Hrigigo, who was to become the secretary-general of the EPLF in the 1970s. They returned with arms and were sent into Barka region of Eritrea. Another group of about seventy trainees went to Syria, and more were to follow later. A total of approximately 300 ELF cadres trained in Syria with the span of five years (1963-1968).[528] In fact Syria remained to be one of the major backers of the ELF and the Syrian military academy provides military training to its officers. [529] A high-level EPLF delegation headed by Ramadan Mohamed Nur, the Secretary General paid an official visit to the Syria. During their stay the delegation met with Muhamad Haydar, Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party national command member and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Office on 8 February 1982, where Rommodan Mahamed Nur expressed appreciation on the stand of the Ba'ath Party. Moreover, condemned the 'Zionist annexation of Golan Heights' and voiced support for 'Syria's steps to confront this plot and thwart all imperialist and Zionist schemes in the Arab region'. [530]

In July 1968, Ba'ath Party army officers mounted a successful coup in Iraq; the new regime gave assistance to the ELF and trained officers. [531] Responding to Ethiopia's request to provide support for the peaceful settlement of the Eritrean problem the Soviet Union addressed several leaders of Arab countries. The Soviet Union has also made a presentation to the Iraqi government concerning the small transfers of Soviet-made weapons to the Eritrean separatists from Iraq through Sudan. [532] As the Iraqi Ba'th began

[528] Markakis, p.12 -
[529] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35
[530] Liberation Published bi-monthly by the EPLF's central bureau of Foreign Relations, vol.1 No.1 January-April 1982, P.17.
[531] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning, The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 99
[532] Soviet Foreign Ministry, Background Report on Soviet-Ethiopian Relations,

to move more openly away from the Soviet Union on a wider international level Soviet plea fell on deaf ears. In fact in May 1978 Iraq threatened to break off diplomatic relations if the Soviet Union continued to support the Ethiopian regime against the 'fraternal' Eritrean secessionists.[533] Iraq that had refused to allow the Soviet Union to transfer equipment from Iraq to the Horn or to use Iraq for airlift over-flights. Iraq-PRDY relations worsened considerably when Iraqi efforts to persuade Aden to end its cooperation with a non-Arab state in operations against fellow Arabs were futile and only drove a wedge between the two states. [534]

In 1969, it (ELF) had also experienced a split into two factions; ELF-RC and EPLF. The former, based in Damascus, was supported by the radical regimes in Syria, Iraq and South Yemen, while the latter, based in Beirut, was backed by moderate Lebanon and the monarchy of King Idris in Libya. The division was partly ideological, partly personal, and partly over tactics. The disagreement between them broke out into fighting in 1972 with bitter feelings continuing thereafter. [535] Iraq has continued to give minimum assistance to Eritrean Liberation Front Revolutionary Command- a small body which split from the ELF and has no military presence in Eritrea. In 1989, Ethiopia opened diplomatic relations with Iraq for the first time since the days of emperor.[536]

The chapter six approaches the role of the Organization of African Unity, both as a source of legitimacy and part of the conflict. It will set out by tracing the inherent structural weaknesses of the continental organization, not with the intention of assessment, but debate how these weaknesses were shaped and manipulated by Ethiopia to seal off Eritrea diplomatically. However, the relevance of this chapter in this report is twofold. One, Africa's established fears for secessionism were effectively exploited by

3 April 1978 Secret. Single copy orig. No. 167/3 ag 03.IV.78 SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS (Reference) Diplomatic relations between the USSR and Ethiopia were established on 21 April 1943. [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1175, ll. 24-32; translation by Svetlana Savran-skaya.]

[533] Financial Times, 27 May 1978.

[534] J. E. Peterson, The Two Yemens and the International Impact of Inter-Yemen Relations, Paper presented to conference on "The Indian Ocean: Perspectives on a Strategic Arena" Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 14-16 October 1982, p. 29.

[535] Madan M. Sauldie, 'Super Power in the Horn of Africa' London, Oriental University Press, 1987. P.104

[536] Roy Pateman, Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning,The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1990, p. 99

Ethiopia to deny Eritrea access to the organization. Second, Ethiopia again used the organization as leverage against Arab and Islamic countries, when Eritrea reciprocated OAU's lack of political will by turning to the Middle Eastern countries for help. The OAU complicated the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, by taking it as Africa verses Arab and/or Christian Versus Islam. Further, this chapter will finally discuss Afro-Arab relations both within the OAU itself and between their respective organizations.

Chapter Six

OAU's Fixation of Pandora's Box and Eritrean Question

> You do not exonerate colonialism because it is a black-on-black colonialism. And if the right to self-determination can be sacrificed for a higher cause of Pan-Africanism, then no African country has the right to independence.[537]
>
> Abdurrahman M. Babu

> Freedom has been subordinated to dominance, and the Eritreans have a right to self-determination. The Eritrean claim will one day prevail, first as a de facto military achievement and later as a state recognized by the OAU.[538]
>
> George W. Shepherd, jr.

> We demand an end to colonialism because domination of one people by another is wrong.[539]
>
> Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia

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[537] A.M. Babu, The Eritrean Question in the Context of African Conflicts and Superpower Rivalries, in Lionel Cliffe and Basil Davidson (eds.), The Long Struggle of Eritrea for Independence and Constructive Peace, Trenton, NJ.: Red Sea Press Inc.,1988, p.50.

[538] George W. Shepherd, jr. " The Trampled Grass: Tributary States and Self-reliance in the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace" Praeger New York 1987. p. 68.

[539] Summit Conference of Independent African States Proceedings of the summit conference of independent African States volume 1 section 2 Addis Ababa May 1963 Address Delivered by Haile Selassie at the Conference of Heads of African States and Governments. *SUMMIT- CIAS/GEN/INF/3 P.8*

6.1 Introduction

The establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, the first such pan-continental institution, heralded the culmination of an older genre of a much wider pan-Black movement emotionally involved with "pigmentational consciousness".[540] This ideological constellation, known as 'Pan-Africanism'[541] was initially linked to communities of African origin residing in North America and the Caribbean. Starting from the 1920s, however, Africans convinced that they should seek their own way towards unity and freedom, aided by the considerable impetus of the two world wars on African nationalism, dominated and geared the movement's objectives into a much direct continental one. Kuwame Nkrumah of Ghana set the precedence by hosting the All African Peoples Conference in Accra in 1958. Hence, "After Second World War, the center of gravity of the pan-African movement shifted from the Americas to Africa." [542]

Africa on the eve of the founding conference was a divided continent where rival blocs emerged in the run-up to the establishment of the OAU. This rift was based upon differences of opinion and approach to major mainly colonial African issues. The founding conference was, thus eclipsed by these axes of division, that failure to set up the organization would have amount, in Haile Selassie's own words, to "the inability of Africa's leaders to transcend local prejudice and individual differences…" [543] The emperor's grave desire to the establishment of the organization had promoted him to

[540] The term is borrowed from Ali Mazrui, Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition, Chicago, University of Chicago press, 1967.

[541] Dov Ronen, The Quest for Self-Determination, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1979, P.35. African quest for self-rule since the French Revolution may be divided into two dominant manifestations: Pan-Africanism, formulated in the mid-nineteenth century and persisted as dominant manifestation until World War II, and decolonization, which began after World War I and continued until the 1960s and 1970s.

[542] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984. P. 50

[543] Summit Conference of Independent African States Proceedings of the summit conference of independent African States volume 1 section 2 Addis Ababa May 1963 Address Delivered by Haile Selassie at the Conference of Heads of African States and Governments. *SUMMIT- CIAS/GEN/INF/3 P.10*

"play a key role in building the consensus". [544] hence, in the founding conference which he hosted pleaded the 30 Heads of State and Government present;

> We cannot leave here without having created a single African organization... If we fail in this, we will have shirked our responsibility to Africa and to the people we lead. If we succeed, then, and only then, will we have justified our presence here.[545]

Despite their differences, the rival Casablanca and Monrovia blocs, as they were later called after the cities that had hosted their respective meetings, both were in favor of working for unity. Hence, they stroke a 'compromise', which essentially fussed their differences into a single institutional structure. Therefore, the OAU owns its inherent strengths and weaknesses to this compromise. Its mixed record of success and failure and even its very survival were attributed to it. Indeed, by and large, the OAU's strength was in its very weakness, because the 'compromise' was as much the reason for its survival as it was for its incapacity. As Domenico notes, these two factors (authority and survival) were inversely related, that survival dominated substance.

> Over the years, there has arisen a tradition in the OAU by which differences between the African states are not allowed to wreck the unity of the organization. This has meant that the OAU has often taken virtually no action at all rather than press for an issue which could disrupt the unity of the continent. Some regard this kind of unity as of a dubious value.[546]

This structural weakness can even be inferred from the "compromise solutions or postponement of issues that had characterized much of OAU's life."[547] Hence, it follows as Legume, Zartman and Langdon in their concerted work state, the "OAU's ability to

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[544] Before the conference six governments had been given the task of drafting a charter: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Ghana, and UAR.

[545] Summit Conference of Independent African States Proceedings of the summit conference of independent African States volume 1 section 2 Addis Ababa May 1963 Address Delivered by Haile Selassie at the Conference of Heads of African States and Governments. *SUMMIT- CIAS/GEN/INF/3 P.6*

[546] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge university Press, Cambridge, 1984,Pp.62-63

[547] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.63.

intervene in conflicts among its own members or within any one of its member states, was strictly limited." [548] Undoubtedly, conflict and security issues had taken up so much of the organization's time and resources over the years. Yet, the OAU's roles in resolving these conflicts were curtained by lack of collective commitment on part of member countries. In fact "Perhaps nowhere else is OAU's weakness more clearly exposed than in matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa."[549] On the other hand, there are yet other arguments that take a stance just as far in the opposite direction. One such contention comes from the International Peace Academy workshop on the OAU that pointed out in its final report "The OAU was not set up to promote Africa's security requirements but was designed primarily to resolve the issue of Southern Africa on African terms." [550] Perhaps it was from this departure that in 2001 the New Africa Journal applauded the OAU for having "for nearly four decades successfully worked for the political liberation of Africa."[551] In the passing of time the OAU's mandate included conflict resolution with the establishment of the defunct Mediation and Reconciliation Commission that reached climax in the abortive peace-keeping experience in Chad.[552] Honestly, it is difficult to generalize the OAU's role in conflict resolution without a concrete analysis of each situation in its specificity, since each situation was typical of its own. Yet, though modest efforts were made, the OAU had long outlived its utility, that there was no such impotence that an organization's "major merit lied in its continued existence".[553] This was more pronounced given Eritrea's case where the organization was not only a complete failure but in the course of time became part of the conflict. "

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[548] Legum, Zartman, Langdon and Lynn K. op. cit., p.38.

[549] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984. P. 66

[550] A Report of the International Peace Academy, Report No. 19 new York 1984, A Workshop at Mohonk Mountain House, New York 18-20 November 1983. Nosakhare O. Obaseki (ed.) African Regional Security and the OAU'S Role in the next Decade, Rapporteur's Report Summary of the Discussion by Hugh Hanning, p.5.

[551] New Africa Journal, July/August 2001, Issue No. 198, P.13.

[552] See Terry M. Mays, Africa's First Peacekeeping Operation: The OAU in Chad, 1981-1982, Westport, Praeger, 2002. See also Dean Pittman, The OAU and Chad, pp. 297-326 in Yassin El-Ayouty and William I. Zartman (ed.), The OAU After Twenty Years, A SAIS Study on Africa, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1984.

[553] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge university Press, Cambridge, 1984,Pp.62-63.

6.2 The OAU and Eritrea

Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia put an end to historical tendencies of his predecessors' quest for a sea outlet by recognizing Eritrea as an Italian colony in the treaty of *Wochale* of 1896. Following the ending of Italian colonization of Eritrea and their occupation of Ethiopia and the subsequent return of the emperor to his throne seemingly created a political vacuum that triggered the resurgence of the older expansionist ambitions of Ethiopia to the 'periphery'. This 'periphery control,' with Eritrea as its center, continued to dominate Ethiopian foreign policy in fact, as it was noted above, it was primarily geared towards achieving that goal.

Ethiopians who had never regarded themselves as Africans[554] effectively used the 'legendary' Ethiopia victory against Italian invasion in 1896 at Adwa, by portraying it an African victory over colonialism. Thus, the long drawn imprint of that war has had a lasting impact on pan-African nationalism, which helped the Ethiopian regimes in augmenting new reality where Ethiopia was the champion of independence. There was another development that boosted Ethiopia's diplomatic stature; the rivalry between Francophone and Anglophone Africa, in which Ethiopia was supposedly neutral. Thus was privileged to work for and host the establishment of the OAU. Thus, Haile Selassie's key role in establishing the OAU was not out of an earnest gesture of "a continental statesmanship…it was a shrewd, calculated move in pursuit of a meticulously worked out foreign policy, which the Eritrean question figured prominently in that policy calculus."[555] The *raison deter* of the OAU in effect came from this Ethiopian search for a

[554] Spencer who contend that the Ethiopians had always regarded themselves a non-Africans, looking to their cultural and linguistic origins in the Arabian Peninsula and the relationship between the Amharic and other Semitic languages such as Arabic and Hebrew. "I am not a Negro at all; I am a Caucasian," the emperor Menelik told the West Indian pan-Africanist Benito Sylvain who had come to Addis Ababa to solicit the emperor's leadership in a society for the "Amelioration of the Negro Race." Haile Sellasie confirmed that view in a declaration to Chief H.O.Davis, a well-known Nigerian nationalist, stating that the Ethiopians did not regard themselves as Africans, but as "a mixed Hamito-Semitic people." Spencer quoted from S.K.B. Asante, Pan African Protest: West Africa and the Ital-Ethiopian Crisis 1934-1941, London, Longman's Ltd., 1977, p.60.

[555] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.63. John Spencer, advisor to Ethiopian government in 1936 and later as principal advisor to the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for periods between 1943 and 1974, in his detailed diplomatic account book 'Ethiopia at Bay' wrote " In essence, Ethiopia's turn to the Third World (Bandug Conference of 1955 and then the establishment of the OAU) was a reflection

cover up for their aggression against Eritrea. Consequently, the OAU, which became prey to its own Charter and statutes further, strained by 'bold' Ethiopian diplomatic maneuverability within its ranks "has done nothing, taken no initiative of any significance to bring [Eritrea's] tragic war to an end." [556] Other than the generally accepted use, incumbency protection, Ethiopia was served by making it more rather than less difficult for the OAU to intervene in Eritrea.

Bereket Habte Selassie, an Eritrean lawyer who represented Ethiopia in the drafting committee of the final draft of the OAU Charter once stated "No one dominant line seemed to prevail, although Nkrumah might argue, with good reason, that the conservative position was more often reflected than the radical one."[557] The charter which is said to be "wholly consistent with that of the United Nations"[558] itself "the result of a flabby compromise in 1963 left the organization hopelessly emasculated" [559] The selection of members to the drafting committee and the subsequent inputs in the Charter's articles were living evidences for this. In the Eritrean case, the provisions in the charter, what were plainly written and meant to protect, were loopholes that were meant to deter the OAU from intervention in Eritrea. The OAU charter was the main legal hurdle that the organization was too weak to jump that Ethiopian through its influence over the Organization of African Unity efficiently neutralized the Eritrean problem.[560] Haile Selassie, who chaired the conference of Heads of State and

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of the problems experience over both Eritrea and the Ogaden." p. 308.

[556] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.65.

[557] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.62. Zartman stated "The compromise largely favored the Monrovia Group (statists), since they were more numerous and more organized by the time of the Addis Ababa meeting of May 1963."William I Zartman, The OAU in the African State System: Interaction and Evolution, p.30 in Yassin El-Ayouty and William Zartman, The OAU After Twenty Years, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1984.

[558] Summit Conference of Independent African States Proceedings of the summit conference of independent African States volume 1 section 2 Addis Ababa May 1963 Address Delivered by Haile Selassie at the Conference of Heads of African States and Governments. *SUMMIT- CIAS/GEN/INF/3 P.10*

[559] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge university Press, Cambridge, 1984. P.81

[560] The Muslim, 31 January 1984. Quoted in Moonis Ahmar, op. cit ., p.62.

Government, where the proposed charter was discussed, pressed for the inclusion of such principles of sanctity of colonial borders and principle of non-interference.

6.3 The Sanctity of Colonial Borders

The sensitivity of border problems and hence the conflicts which they could instigate were ably presented by speeches delivered in the founding conference. Maintenance of the *status quo*, especially for the conservatives, who sought "a practical response to the balkanized condition of Africa…thus a real need for an organization capable of stabilizing the new continental political system,[561] not only necessitated the establishment of the organization but also its charter was designed to serve to this end. One such solution as embodied in its charter, 3, paragraph 3, is the principle of '... respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right for independent existence.[562]

Unscrupulous partitioning of the continent was perhaps the most common charge which African nationalists leveled against colonial powers during and after independence. Paradoxically, however, this very accusation was sanctified by both the Organizations' charter and the first meeting of the Council of Ministers. The OAU's Cairo Declaration of 21 June 1964, stated that the border problems in Africa constituted 'a grave and permanent factor of dissension' and that the OAU members 'pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence. [563] Thus, previously denounced artificial frontiers have now become a 'tangible reality' of African politics. [564] Bereket, expressed his distaste to this declaration by calling it "the modern (post-colonial) equivalent of the Berlin Conference…" [565] This was another manifestation of the pervasiveness of the conservatives' stance for maintaining the territorial *status quo* against the radical's view of complete unity. Nkrumah who called African boundaries "fatal relic of colonialism" said "Only African unity, which will render existing

[561] Legum, Zartman, Langdon and Lynn K. op. cit., p.37.
[562] OAU Charter, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25 May, 1963.
[563] Sauldie, op. cit ., p.24.
[564] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.34
[565] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.61.

boundaries obsolete and superfluous, can heal this festering sore of boundary disputes between our various states.[566] This, however, was not synonymous with maintaining colonial boundaries as declared in Cairo in 1964.

Eritrea's question was one of traditional colonialism justified for self-determination in accordance with the Declaration by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Granting of Independence to Colonial countries and People's.[567] The UN decision to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia under the pretext of 'accommodation of Ethiopian interest" implies recognition of Eritrea's right for self-determination. In essence, the Eritrean case is a question of denied decolonization like those of Namibia and Western Sahara. [568] Some argue, other than the Ethiopians, that the struggle for Eritrean independence was fraught with implications for the basic OAU principle of maintaining the integrity of boundaries inherited from the colonial era. [569] However, Eritrea with her own colonial boundaries was not a revisionist struggle, that was in contradiction to the sanctity of colonial boundaries but it was one which defended that very principle, which was being violated by a founding member.

Therefore, Ethiopian insistence of the inclusion of the sanctity of colonial boundaries was meant "to make common cause with other African states whose fear of state disintegration was equally great, thus penning the Eritreans into the confines of the principle of respect for the existing inherited frontiers. [570] This is thus what Haile Selassie had in mind when he forcefully annexed Eritrea just six months before the founding conference of the OAU. He then presented a *fait accompli* of a 'United Ethiopia' to the OAU summit, so that he could claim later that the decision regarding the colonially fixed

[566] Summit Conference of Independent African States Proceedings of the summit conference of independent African States volume 1 section 2 Addis Ababa May 1963 .United We Stand: An address by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana May 1963 *SUMMIT- CIAS/GEN/INF/36 P.7*

[567] G.A Res. 1514. 15 U.N GAOR. Supp. (No.16) 66. U.N Doc. A/4684 (1960)

[568] Bereket Habte Selassie, The OAU and Regional Conflicts: Focus on the Eritrean War, Africa Today, 3rd/4th Quarters, 1988, p.66.

[569] James e. Dougherty, the horn of Africa: a map of political-strategic conflict special report. institute of Foreign policy analysis, Inc.

[570] Christopher Clapham, 'Historical Incorporation and Inheritance', in Timothy M. Shaw & Olajid Aluko (eds.), The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis, Trowbridge, Great Britain, Redwood Burn Ltd., 1984, pp. 85-86.

boundaries was not applicable to Ethiopia and Eritrea.[571] Ethiopia one of the founding members of the OAU has been assiduous in cultivating African states and equally assiduous in ensuring that the issue of boundaries received higher priority than the issue of self-determination. [572] Thomas states the legitimizing the territorial *status quo*, implied legitimizing the involuntary membership of a territorial-political unit by certain peoples. Once colonialism had been eradicated, intervention on the grounds of upholding self-determination is disallowed.[573] In fact, he did manage to skip the fear, which Modibo Keita of Mali voiced;

> We must take Africa as it is, and we must renounce any territorial claims, if we do not wish to introduce what might be called black imperialism in Africa… [Emphasis added][574]

African backed the sanctity of the OAU principle that the integrity of boundaries inherited from the colonial era must be maintained. One national grouping and culture in Eritrea: this means that the Eritrean question is not a nationalistic question. [575] Ethiopia asserted the territory known as Ogaden has belonged to her historically and that treaties between itself and the Europeans to whom Somali leaders had already consigned their sovereignty delimited the present boundaries. Ethiopia, therefore, had no choice but to sign boundary agreements with the power in control and these treaties are no different from the boundary treaties that have eventually given raise to scores of independent African countries recently.[576]

6.4 The Principle of Non-Intervention

President Nyerere of Tanzania, one of the founding father of the OAU, had once remarked "Charter stood for the protection of their heads of State and served as a trade

[571] Habte Selassie, Africa Today, 1988, p.64.
[572] Pool, op. cit ., p.45.
[573] Caroline Thomas, New States, Sovereignty and Intervention, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1985, p.70.
[574] Cited by Saadia Touval, The OAU and African Borders, International Organization, Vol. 21, 1967, p.104.
[575] Secret document of the Ethiopian foreign ministry.
[576] Ayele, op. cit .,p.66.

union which protected them."[577] This assertion was well vindicated by the OAU Charter, which an excerpt from its permeable reads: 'We, the Heads of African State and Government'. Thus, the assertion that the OAU principle of noninterference in members' 'internal affairs was meant to serve for this end. Some even argue that the acquiesce of the principle from refraining member states from taking sides in civil war situations implies that their support should automatically go to the member government. [578] The OAU has insisted on treating the Eritrean struggle purely as an internal Ethiopian problem which lies outside its mandate. Apart from its basic opposition, in principle, to secessionism and to border changes through violence, the OAU's role has been to maintain a neutral position. [579] Thus the OAU found it politically expedient to refuse to recognize the situation as a war of liberation, thereby legitimizing by default the continued occupation of Eritrea by Ethiopia.[580]

Thomas, who took notice of the recognition bestowed to the principle by African statesmen and jurists, argues "Self-determination, within the context of colonial boundaries, is prior to the principle of non-intervention. Hence article 3 paragraph (vi) refers to the "absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent".[581] Therefore, he claimed that "under the OAU Charter, the principle of non-intervention was to be *operated between independent'* African states [emphasis added].[582] The OAU made decolonization its most important purposes as enshrined in Article 2 (1) to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa.

The definition of colonialism was the problem with the case of Eritrea. It could be said that the OAU had double-standard in its definition. Ethiopia under the emperor championed anti colonial activism to guise its atrocities which were committed at the

[577] Domenico Mazzeo, (ed.) 'African Regional organizations' The Organization of African Unity' by K. Mathews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984. p.79. quote from Ali A. Mazrui, 'Rights of States or of People- Where should the OAU Focus?', New African (London), August 1977, p.779.
[578] Legum, Zartman, Langdon and Lynn K. op. cit., p.38.
[579] Legum & Lee, op. cit ., p.15.
[580] Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, The OAU and the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination: A plea for a Fresh Approach, Africa Today, 3rd/4th Quarters, 1988, p.33
[581] Caroline Thomas, New States, Sovereignty and Intervention, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1985, p.65.
[582] Caroline, op. cit ., p.66.

door-step of the OAU. Apartheid South Africa though an independent state since 1910 which was duly recognized by the Lusaka Manifesto[583], the OAU intervened in fact it was one of its major goals. This explains the contradiction imbedded in the charter between the principle of non-intervention and the political liberation of the continent both from foreign colonization and territories under white minority rule. Unlike the liberation movements in southern Africa, the Eritreans were opposed by combination of westernized and conservative African interests that viewed secession on the African continent as subversive of all newly established authority.

6.5 Eritrea's question and Afro-Arab relations

Arab involvement in Africa grew significantly in the 1970s for a number of different reasons. The strong support black African governments gave to the restoration of Arab territories occupied by Israel after the 1967 war was the notable one. Until the diplomatic rupture between African states and Israel over the October 1973 War, the great majority of OAU member states consistently endorsed the UN decisions on the Middle East: recognize Israel's right to exist, and support separate Palestinian state. Since the 1973, however, sub-Sahara African states overwhelmingly came to the Arab side. But in times of low tension they gave strong support to mediation efforts for negotiated settlement along the lines of Un Resolutions 242 and 338.[584]

Understandably, Addis Abba had denounced Arab interference in its internal affairs. Hence, Ethiopia repeatedly called upon the OAU to pass resolutions condemning Arabs for meddling in the war in Eritrea to no avail. The reasons being: first, Ethiopia did not formally bring the matter before the OAU, and there is no justification for the organization to intervene in what it considers to be the internal affairs of a member state. It was the policy of Ethiopian regimes that they should not agree to have the Eritrean question put on the official agenda of the OAU meetings and prevents the

[583] The Manifesto signed by fourteen east and central African states in April 1969, states that " the Republic of South Africa is itself and independent Sovereign state and a member of the United Nation" see Ian Brownlie (ed.), Basic Documents on African Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1971.

[584] Catherine Gwin, Introduction: International Involvement in a Changin Africa, pp. 52-53. Africa in the 1980s : a continent in crisis. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1979.

internationalization of the Eritrean cause. Second, the 'Bloody Saturday' massacre of November, 1974 and the subsequent execution of sixty people for opposing the reforms of the military had angered the OAU members. Third, some African states were displeased with the humiliating treatment the military gave to late Emperor Haile Selassie who was regarded as 'Africa's elder statesman'. Fourth, Ethiopia's expectations that the OAU should take a stand against Arab intervention in its internal affairs are contrary to the reality of practical politics and economics. [585]

It had warned that the encouragement they were extending to the Eritrean insurgents 'can destroy the good relations between Ethiopian and Arab countries, but also between the whole of Africa and the rest of the Arab world'. Indeed, Ethiopia threatened: the acts of piracy pursued by Syria and certain Arab countries against a member state of the OAU and their claim that the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa are parts of the Arab land are bound to bring to an open question the future of neighborly relations between black Africa and Arab countries. Ethiopia's African soil will never become part of the Arab land. [586] Ethiopia, the home of the OAU, appealed to the sanctity of this principle whenever it could. Its appeals fell on more receptive ears in Black Africa than in Arab Africa. Since Arab support for Eritrea constituted an effort to break up a Black state, Addis Ababa was able to play upon the latent but real antagonism between the two groups within the OAU, where Black members are far more numerous, to keep the organization from taking a position opposed to Ethiopia.[587] The African memory of slave trading has been one important element in the persistent Ethiopian line that the Eritrean demands are a part of an Arab-Muslim plot. The peasant militiamen who in 1977 were prisoners of war in Eritrea were told that they were going north to fight Arab invasion.[588] This continued till the fall of the dictator Mengistu in 1991.

[585] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35
[586] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35
[587] Dougherty, op. cit .
[588] Pool, op. cit ., P.45.

Undoubtedly, Arab support of the Eritrean rebellion has increased tension between the Arab and non-Arab members of the OAU, but what is puzzling to both Ethiopia and the ELF is the wait-and-see attitude of the OAU. The ELF has appealed for OAU intervention but their appeal run counter to the stated policy and principle of the OAU. Their statement from Beirut in February of 1975 reads:

> We request the OAU to play its role and take steps to stop the genocide which Ethiopia is committing against our people. The OAU should not remain indifferent to the plight of the Eritrean people who are being slaughtered *en masse* at the threshold of its headquarters. [589]

At the July 1975 OAU summit in Uganda capital; Kampala, Tunisia suggested the granting of observer status to the Eritrean movement. Ethiopia resisted the move but then had to sever diplomatic relations with Tunisia. The Ethiopian position became untenable when Tunisia argued that the Ethiopian action was tantamount to the exclusion of the Tunisian embassy from Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the OAU. [590]

Despite the efforts made by the Arabs in extending aid and in supporting forms of political understanding within the Afro-Arab multilateral network, the African perception is inevitably affected by the grave and constant up setting of OAU principles as a result of pan-Arab assertiveness in the Horn. Though sometimes afraid of Ethiopia's Soviet and Cuban links, most of the African countries have very firmly backed Addis Ababa's claims over Eritrea. Along with pan-Arabism, East-west preoccupations and alignments have been a further factor leading to micro-Afro-Arab policies in the Red Sea area. One must recall that Arab policies designed exploiting pan-Arab assertiveness in Eritrea and Somalia have here again turned out to be as many blows to the African doctrine of continental stability. Consequently, they have added to the negative effects perpetrated by other micro-Afro-Arab approaches.[591]

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[589] Africa Report Nov.-Dece. 1975 vol.20 No.6 The OAU and the Secession Issue, p.35
[590] Sauldie, op. cit , p.118.
[591] Aliboni, op. cit .,p.110.

Although the OAU is firmly opposed to any external interference in the continent's internal conflicts, it has not had much success in preventing 'foreign meddling.' For example, Ethiopia was unsuccessful in getting support to dissuade a number of Arab states as well as Soviet-bloc countries from openly supporting the Eritrean secessionist struggle. Since practically all the OAU members are opposed to secession of any kind, they had every reason for responding positively to the Ethiopians' appeal. Nevertheless the OAU showed itself incapable of mobilizing its members to make a strong demarche against countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, which provided most of the economic and military aid needed to sustain the Eritrean liberation movement.

"The council denounces the American Presence in Asmara and Massawa (Eritrea) and calls on the Ethiopian Government to liquidate these bases immediately"[592] "Considering the especial case of Eritrea and its seriousness, the council even appealed to the United Nations to reconsider its Federal Resolution of 1950 and adopted a just resolution in the interests of the Eritrean people."[593] The Eritrean Liberation Front, as the legal representative of the Eritrean people, implores you to accord it recognition as one of the national Liberation Movements of Africa, and shoulder your historical responsibility to halt Ethiopian's vicious aggression against the Eritrean people's right to freedom and self-determination according to the international principles.[594]

6.6 The Dergue

The Dergue who lost no opportunity to denounce the old Emperor as feudal autocracy, despite the change of orientation in domestic and foreign policies, their stand on the Eritrean case was no different and remained unchanged. Indeed, the military Junta, which was bent to militarily annihilate the Eritrean nationalists "unfailingly launched a major offensives to coincide with the annual summit Meetings of the OAU. These offensives were intended to give African delegates the impression that it is not worth their while to

[592] Ninth Council Session of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization, 9-11/11/1970, Tripoli, Resolutions Para. 2, Doc. No.5/21/pol.
[593] Ibid.,
[594] Memorandum to the African and Arab Heads of States Conference held in Cairo, 7/3/1977, sent by Eritrean Liberation front 5/3/1977, p.4. Original document RICE. HIS/ELF/1/02180.

take up the Eritrean issue[595] as Ethiopia has "annihilated the last remnants of "the handful bandits" by the time their next meeting is held.

This state of affair continued after the deposition of the Emperor, as the diplomatically inexperience military junta had inherited his astute diplomacy. Such legacies included Ethiopia's inflated image and its quasi status Addis Ababa as the centre of African diplomacy, hosting the headquarters for United Nations African Economic commission and the Organization of African Unity. This means that no Eritrean delegation can go to plead the case of Eritrea in Addis Ababa where most of the summits have been held. This has given Ethiopia an incalculable advantage in its strategy to isolate and misrepresent the Eritrean issue, miscasting it as secessionist and identical with Biafra.[596] Out of eighteen mediation efforts done by the OAU from 1963 to 1971 Ethiopia was in ten of the efforts which were all successful except three. But after the coup Ethiopia's active African diplomacy declined. If its role in mediation efforts is an indication, out of twenty OAU mediation efforts from 1975 to 1983 Ethiopia was part of a mediating party only in two one in 1976 and the other in 1983, which at least the first was failure. On top of this, Ethiopia hosted 25 out of 44 summit meetings of the organization from 1963-june 1974 and ten out of 33 meetings from 1975- 1983. [597]

The whole notion of continental jurisdiction embodied in the Charter is a device for keeping African Affairs free from foreign interference…"[598] The OAU not only failed to prevent foreign intervention in the continent, it mere existence was a factor whom did foreign powers intervene with. For instance, in carrying out a massive airlift of arms to Ethiopia, the Soviet Union attempted to appear to be providing support only against external aggression, not against an internal war of liberation that was viewed favorably

[595] Kahasai Berhane, A Political and Legal Analysis of the Eritrean Question, African Research and Publications Project, Inc., Trenton N.J., Working paper No.7, p.1
[596] Bereket Habte Selassie, 'The OAU and Regional Conflicts: Focus on the Eritrean War', Africa Today, 3rd/4th Quarters, 1988, p.64.
[597] For full mediation list see Yassin El-Ayouty and William I. Zartman, The OAU After Twenty Years, Annex 4 and Annex 6, pp.369-376 pp.379-383.
[598] Y. R. Barongo, Neocolonialism and Africa Politics, New York, Vantage Press,1980, p.76 cited in Caroline Thomas, New States, Sovereignty and Intervention, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1985, p.64.

by the Arabs.[599] That legitimized Soviet African activities by ostensibly defending the sacred African principle of national territorial integrity. [600] At various times foreign countries which were willing to help Eritrea's struggle did not do so, for it might be against the norms of the OAU. Thus, the trickling aid that came from some big powers either came through third parties or was undertaken in absolute secrecy.

[599] Dougherty, op. cit ,
[600] Vanneman and James, op. cit., p.34.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The re-birth of Eritrea as a sovereign state is fairly recent when compared to many other African countries. However, the rockiness of the road traveled was endlessly frustrating, and the history of the struggle too long and complex to be summarized in few pages. This report is, of course, not entirely comprehensive it has only singles out one thread, the effects of Arab intervention. However, as the intricacy of that history warrants background information, an attempt has also been made to recapitulate its main outlines in terms of the persistent themes, by taking up a few remarkable and demonstrative issues that are most relevant to the topic at hand.

No one can deny that Eritrea has had a pre-colonial links with Ethiopia, as commonly is the case in every neighboring peoples. This links, however, were marred with persistent incursions form different power centers of Ethiopia. The frequency and failure of these incursions, however, vindicate neither Ethiopia's historical claims not the 'core-periphery' contention of Ethiopianist writers. Therefore, these pre-colonial connections could only be taken as appendix to the distinct historical development of Eritrea. Yet,

Ethiopia's mythical claims, which involved the manipulation of these distant links, made it all too important the pre-colonial history the subject of discussion in this report.

As often noted, though for different intentions and purposes, parts of present-day Eritrea made up the bedrock of the so called Axumite civilization. The ominous aspect of the basic contradictions of Ethiopia's claims, however, stem form that Ethiopia traces its origins to the Axumite kingdom (1000 BC); and its uninterrupted independent existence ever since. The claims were brilliantly fused with the classical use of the name 'Ethiopia', which emperor Haile Selassie, by imperial decree, lent the name to his empire in the mid-1940s. Withstanding this fabulous misrepresentation, Ethiopia is as old a state, in its present shape, as Eritrea and other African states.

Abyssinian ambitions to conquer other chieftains endured for millennia, resulting in a continuous flux of centers of power. It was only in the 18th century, Emperor Tedross, a powerful centralist monarch, who managed to subdue all of these chieftains and created a unified Abyssinia proper. It was Emperor Menelik II, by series of campaign who conquered large sways of land from other peoples, which Abyssinians would like to call these campaigns the 'Southern Marches' or 'process of centralization'. Hence, Ethiopia took its present shape as late as 19th century, and the social mosaic that makes up Ethiopia to the present day. The manifold tribal dissidence, armed rebellion and violent disorder that have rocked the country till date are manifestations of the recently fragile formation of 'Ethiopia'.

Menelik II, expansionist tendencies did not end there. Following his restoration to the throne with the help of the British, Emperor Haile Selassie, the last feudal autocrat of the empire and of Africa, annexed Eritrea as the last adjunct to his empire. As aforementioned, this was nothing new in the annals of Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict; rather it symbolized the resurgence of the older imperial ambitions of access to the sea. What was, bower, new was he context and the means this ambition was achieved. As a new regional and international political landscape has unfolded after WWII, Emperor Haile Selassie,

who was an astute tactician, made diplomacy his best asset to compensate his economic and military weaknesses. Hence, to justify the end, it became indispensable for the emperor to find a premise for his claims on Eritrea. The absence of any credible historical links between his empire and Eritrea, promoted him to fabricate one. This claim, founded upon mythical facts that go as far back as three thousand years, was energetically pursed. In fact, both history and geography collided to lend the emperor's claims credence to achieving his deep seated desire of annexing Eritrea.

The literature on this myth sustained claimed on Eritrea led to the dichotomy between those casual observers who either ignored or treated it with curious casualness and those staunch propagandists of the empire, often referred to as Ethiopianists, who often parroted the empire's side of the story. The latter, who were geared to the study of order rather than change, tried to make sense out of the myth, to no avail. Yet, they effectively remolded it into a 'regime of truth'. This well-tailored 'regime of truth' supported by Ethiopia's strong propaganda and diplomatic machinery, eclipsed the actual nature of the Eritrean case, leaving it in limbo to become the source of a prolific spectrum of diverse interpretations and misconceptions. Its impact became more serious, however, following the commencement of the armed struggle- as it hampered the acceptance of the nonconformist view and interpretations of that history, the *raison deter* for the legitimacy of Eritrea's struggle. From this perspective, historical opposition to Ethiopia's coercive unity not only was denied but also marginalized. Worse, they misnamed the struggle as an 'Arab inspire secessionism', perfectly fitting into Ethiopia's side of the story, which dubbed it 'banditry' and hence as its internal affair.

Cold War analysts insistently viewed the superpower rivalry in the Horn of Africa in context of the Ethiopia-Somalia conflicts over the Ogaden. This was justified by the fact that states have been the exclusive units of analysis for contemporary literature on African politics and foreign relations. This was so because African states were/are the most important actors in both fields, where countries of the Horn do not make an exception. From this departure, these analysts gave the most earnest heed to Somali-

Ethiopian hostilities over the Ogaden in analyzing the diplomatic history of the region. Nevertheless, the longest but the least talked about war- Eritrea's war of independence- in the final analysis, was the innermost cause for the area to turn into another cockpit of international rivalry. In fact, the diplomatic history of Eritrea's quest for statehood, largely, coincided with the history of superpower rivalry in the Horn of Africa. Hence, the looming Cold War complicated Eritrea's quest for statehood in the 1940, as the collapse of the Berlin wall led to its resolution in early 1990s.

The unvarnished history of the United Nations' role in Eritrea was one of the tragic and latter of a missed opportunity for peace in the Horn of Africa. The United Nations was torn apart by the rival superpower interests that had manifested themselves with disturbing intensity in the UNGA debates. Indeed, the diplomatic theatrics, surrounding the UNGA's deliberations on the future of Eritrea, took three odd years, producing "more than one hundred draft resolutions" and another two commissions of inquire.[601] The only certainty that emerged from this drama was that the future of the territory was determined not by the wishes of its inhabitants- though lip service was, undoubtedly, paid to their wishes. Therefore, Eritrea's case was a classical application of marriage by proxy, which lacked the consent of Eritreans, whose right for independence was overridden by the interests of the United Sates and its self-designated proxies.

To Haile Selassie, the message of US-Soviet competition in the UNGA debates was quite clear. Thus, under the guise of positive neutralism, he exploited their craving for bases in Eritrea, playing them one against another. Later strategic and operational blunders justified by the Cold war realties made Eritrea a revolving-door for superpower intervention. Alternately, both powers made massive arm transfers, committed millions of dollars in economic aid and both were chest-deep in Ethiopia's war operations. Thus, by doing so these superpowers sustained the conflict that maintained the *status quo*. This state of affairs gave Ethiopia, a weak third world state, tremendous opportunity to effectively negotiate from a position of weakness. Thus, the emperor successfully

[601] "Rumblings Along the red Sea: The Eritrean Question," John Franklin Campbell, Foreign Affairs, vol. 48, no. 4, New York, April 1970, p.540.

changed his country diplomatically into a dog-wagging tail, whish far exceeded it material resources. This suggest a reason for the apparent inability of these powers and their proxies to look through the 'regime of truth', which had fitted to their pas assumptions, positions and precedents.

Ethiopia, once again, through a combination of historical chance and diplomatic and military maneuver secured the neutrality of the OAU. It should not come as a surprise that African states responded by granting diplomatic recognition to Ethiopia's claims. First, the Emperor, three months before the establishment of the OAU, had destroyed the Eritrean-Ethiopia federal arrangement, creating a *fiat accompli*. Second, the continental statesmanship status of the Emperor was strengthened by his destined important role in bridging the gap between the two forces the made up the OAU. Third, this gave him the opportunity to incorporate constitutional provisions that ostensibly addressed the fear of other African leaders, but the emperor's intention was to put legal constraints to diplomatically isolate Eritrea. These provisions got the general consensus forced by the circumstance of the fragile state systems of post-colonial states.

When the continental doors for help were closed to the Eritreans they looked elsewhere for help. Thus, owing to their religious and historical affinity, they approached Arab countries for help. Ethiopia unleashed a barrage of diplomatic and media campaigns against this initiative, recounting the old hostilities and fears of Arab expansion. These fell on receptive ears of Africa, hence setting a vicious circle. Ethiopia, pointing to Arab support as a sign of creeping Arabization of the Horn of Africa, (and hence Africa, gave it Arab against Africa tone. African states, through prejudice or self-interest, were predisposed to share it, and shunned Eritrea further. This affair took its own life and set a vicious circle, whereby Africans saw Eritrea with suspicion and found it politically expedient to help it, and Eritrea would look to Arab countries for whatever help they could get, as long as it found it impossible from the OAU.

Therefore, Eritrean which had remarkable parallels with Western Sahara, which the OAU gave full recognition, was viewed as sterile and disruptive element. It was considered a domestic affair of a strong member state, but it also made Eritrea a convenient target for the discharge of its aggressive urges born out of continental fixation of the Pandora's Box for secessionism elsewhere in the continent. The irony was that, however, Eritrea's struggle was not a 'revisionist' one whose ultimate goal was to change the agreed upon colonial borders, but to defend them and maintain the status quo. It was impractical for members of the OAU to comprehend this singular nature of Eritrea's quest for independence. Because the location of the headquarters of the organization in Addis Ababa, faired little, if at all, for Eritreans to tell their side of the story to disprove Ethiopia's and to lift the veil that had barred the majority of African states and a collective international judgment on the legitimacy of it case, it was impossible to prove. In this case, the OAU's acquiesce, though wholly not rational, amounted as intervention in the final analysis.

Other than the various policies of extra-regional states that had affected the course of the war, the other most obvious ones were Middle Eastern powers, which Eritrea's struggle came to be closely identified with. Haggai Erlich correctly noted that Eritrea "played a significant role in bringing the Red Sea and connecting the Horn with the Middle East."[602] Part of the explanation came from the geography and imperial nature of the Ethiopian state, which has as much shared interest with these countries as conflicts of interest. Geographically, Ethiopia is the 'water power' of the region, as she is the source of more than three-quarters of the Nile River and all major rivers that flow to Somalia. It imperial nature had also locked it in conflict with Somalia over its Somalis inhabited region.

However, Eritrea provided the chief reason for Middle Eastern countries to intervene into the conflicts of the Horn of Africa. Eritrea found itself caught in the web of Afro-Arab diplomatic wrangling, which was the byproduct of their uneasy and erratic political and

[602] Erlich, op cit. , p.55.

economic relations. These countries had also intervened on the side of Somalia in its war against Ethiopia. However, as Ethiopia- Somalia, other than the war of attrition, had only gone to all-out war twice in three decades, it had been less a reason for the continuous Arab interferences in the region's affairs than Eritrea's war that had run for three decades.

The reason for individual interventions varied significantly. Consequently, the pattern of intervention were not uniform but could be viewed as lying in a sort of continuum. Misperception of Eritrea's identity and its future, constituted the sole collective basis for Middle Eastern powers to intervene. On one end of this continuum there are the Arab countries, such as Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Yemen…etc and Israel and her supporters on the other end. This process, however, had flowed complex combination of domestic and international factors. These were; the dominant Ethiopia's 'regime of truth' and its image as a beleaguered Christian enclave in a sea of Muslims, coupled by the vagaries and wrong signals that he rhetoric of Eritrean liberation leaders, especially of the ELF's, sent to the Arab capitals including to Tel-Aviv. Thus, both were inevitable ingredients to the complexion of the struggle and the delay of independence. Moreover, the opacity of Middle Eastern powers' involvement in the Eritrean war made it difficult to ascertain, much less evaluate, the relevant facts, as did the OAU. Eritrean nationalists were viewed as the 'instruments of Arab expansion', though this conclusion was drawn from long chains of logic based upon speculation and allegations. Such misperception became too bold, nevertheless, that it had often made it much easier for analysts to fall back to the provisions of Arab support, when even analyzing the internal dynamism of the struggle itself.

Arab support was not as important to the struggle, especially in the latter stage, as the academic and media claimed. Ethiopia played the Nile and SPLA cares to neutralize the potential neighboring supporters Egypt and Sudan. The only countries which openly supported were Syria and Iraq, which were well insulated from Ethiopia's military and political might. Yet, their support was not that important without the full support of the

neighboring countries, particularly Sudan, which was vital as a port of entry. No matter the motivation and pattern of intervention, Arab support to Eritrea remained minimal. It was more rhetorical than substantial. The little and inconsistent support ultimately was akin to what a painkiller is to a tooth with a cavity. It only helps to reduce the suffering, both to address the underlying problem. In fact, it came to have negative impact, particularly at the latter stage of the struggle as these countries exported their respective ideologies, interests and differences with whatever help they sent. There are two things, however, that should not be ignored: first, the general sympathy that Arab countries had on the struggle and their contribution of the struggle to start; second, the role played by the populace and the civil societies of these polities in helping the Eritrean people and struggle.

In sum, it should be obvious, however, given the complexity of Eritrea's political history that is inseparable from the intricacies of the Cold War superpower rivalry, the volatility of the regional context, the intermingling of the Middle East conflict- not to mention Ethiopia's own internal problem, this them deserves initiatives of more detailed analysis than had been given in this report.

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Transcript of Meeting between East German leader Erich Honecker and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, East Berlin, 3 April 1977 (excerpts) Minutes of the conversation between Comrade Erich Honecker and Comrade Fidel Castro, Sunday, 3 April 1977 between 11:00 and 13:30 and 15:45 and 18:00, House of the Central Committee, Berlin. [remainder of conversation omitted--ed.][Source: Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv" (Berlin), DY30 JIV 2/201/1292; document obtained by Christian F. Ostermann and translated by David Welch with revisions by Ostermann.]

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Acting Charge d'affaires in Ethiopia S. Sinitsin and Ethiopian official Maj. Berhanu Bayeh,18 March 1977 TOP SECRET Copy No. 2 From the journal of 30 March 1977 SINITSIN, S.Ia. Issue No. 124 RECORD OF CONVERSATION with the member of the Permanent Committee of the PMAC Major BERHANU BAYEH 18 March 1977 This evening I visited Berhanu Bayeh in the office of the PMAC at his request. Referring to an instruction of the leadership of the PMAC, he informed me for transmission to Moscow of the following.

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Third African Department, Soviet Foreign Ministry, Information Report on Somali-Ethiopian Territorial Disputes, 2 February 1977 SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH ETHIOPIA AND THE POSITION OF THE USSR (Brief Information Sheet)

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Mengistu, 29 July 1977 TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From diary of 9 August 1977 A. P. RATANOV Ser. No. 276 NOTES OF CONVERSATION with Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia HAILE MARIAM MENGISTU 29 July 1977We received a visit from Mengistu and transmitted to him a message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev in response to a communication from Mengistu, which was presented to Comrade Brezhnev for Comrade A. P. Kirilenko by the General Secretary of the PMAC, Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Somalia G.V. Samsonov and Somali President Siad Barre, 23 February 1977 EMBASSY OF THE USSR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA From the journal of Secret. Copy No. 2 G.V. SAMSONOV Orig. No. 101

11 March 1977 NOTES FROM CONVERSATION with President of the Democratic Republic of Somalia MOHAMMED SIAD BARRE 23 February 1977 Today I was received by President Siad. In accordance with my orders I informed him about the considerations of the Soviet leaders, and Comrade Brezhnev personally, concerning the situation developing around Ethiopia. AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE SDR /G. SAMSONOV/ [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1621, ll. 10-14; translation by S. Savranskaya.]

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Soviet Foreign Ministry and CPSU CC International Department, Background Report on the Somali-Ethiopian Conflict, 3 April 1978 Secret, Copy No. 3 Issue 164/3afo IV.03.78 ABOUT THE SOMALIA-ETHIOPIA CONFLICT (Information Sheet) Third African Department MFA USSR [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1175, ll. 13-23; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]

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Memorandum of Conversation of SED Comrade Lamberz with Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia, Comrade Pepe, Addis Ababa, 3 March 1978 (dated 4 March 1978) (Based on notes of Comrade General Major Jaenicke.) [Introductory remarks] *[Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY30 IV 2/2.035/127; document obtained and translated by Christian F. Ostermann.]*

[1] Memorandum of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov with U.S. Charge d'Affaires A. Tienkin, 3 September 1977 TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From the journal of 6 September

1977 Ratanov, A.P. Original No. 339 EMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION with USA charge d'affaires in Ethiopia A[RTHUR] TIENKIN 3 September 1977 By previous agreement I met with A. Tienkin at the Soviet Embassy. During the discussion he made the following comments.

[1] A. Gromyko Iu. Andropov B. Ponomarev 11 July 1978 *[Source: APRF, f. 3, op. 91, d. 272, ll. 140-143; translated by Mark Doctoroff.]*Soviet Embassy in Ethiopia, background report on "Ethiopia's Relations with Western Countries," August 1978 USSR EMBASSY TO SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA Re: no 275 14 August 1978 ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES (Information)

Memorandum of Conversation Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov with Mengistu Haile Mariam, Ethiopian President, 7 August 1977, from The Journal of Top Secrets, Copy no. 2 16 August 1977 re: no. 292 [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 127-128; translated by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Felleke Gedle Giorgis, 14 September 1977, Original No. 354 Copy No. 2 From The Journal of Top Secret 29 September 1977. *[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1636, ll. 139-40;* translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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The Ethiopian Government Aide Memoir, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release, 14 November 1963. Case studies in African Diplomacy:2, The Ethiopia-Somalia-Kenya Dispute 1960-1967, Dar Es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.41.

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia A.P. Ratanov and Mengistu, 29 July 1977 TOP SECRET, Copy No. 2 From diary of 9 August 1977 A. P. RATANOV Ser. No. 276 NOTES OF CONVERSATION with Chairman of PMAC of Ethiopia HAILE MARIAM MENGISTU 29 July 1977We received a visit from Mengistu and transmitted to him a message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev in response to a communication from Mengistu, which was presented to Comrade Brezhnev for Comrade A. P. Kirilenko by the General Secretary of the PMAC, Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Somalia G.V. Samsonov and Somali President Siad Barre, 23 February 1977 EMBASSY OF THE USSR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA From the journal of Secret. Copy No. 2 G.V. SAMSONOV Orig. No. 101 11 March 1977 NOTES FROM CONVERSATION with President of the Democratic Republic of Somalia MOHAMMED SIAD BARRE 23 February 1977 Today I was received by President Siad. In accordance with my orders I informed him about the considerations of the Soviet leaders, and Comrade Brezhnev personally, concerning the situation developing around Ethiopia. AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE SDR /G. SAMSONOV/ [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1621, ll. 10-14; translation by S. Savranskaya.]

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Presidential Council of South Yemen, Rubayi-i-Ali. [Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 73, d. 1619, ll. 61-68; translated by Paul Henze.]

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