ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE ROLE OF MILITARY POWER IN
ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY (1974-1991)

BEROUK MESFIN

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**BY
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List of Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
APC	Armored Personnel Carrier
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
DoA	Department of the Army (of the United States)
EAF	Ethiopian Armed Forces
EPDA	Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
GRU	Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye (Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet General Staff)
HQ	Headquarters
ION	Indian Ocean Newsletter
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
KGB	Komitet Godusdartsvennoy Bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)
MID	Military Intelligence Department
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of Information
MoND	Ministry of National Defence
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDSC	National Defense and Security Council
NPA	Novosti Press Agency
NRCC	National Revolutionary Campaign Center
NROC	National Revolutionary Operations Command
NSS	National Security Service
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy

PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
RCCC	Revolutionary Campaign Coordination Center
SMSC	Supreme Military Strategic Committee
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Front
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
US	United States
VIP	Very Important Person
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

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Abstract

Among the most intriguing problems confronting students of international relations is the role of military power in the furtherance of a state's national security. In fact, it is a subject with such wide ramifications that no claim to comprehensive treatment can be easily made. Nonetheless, this study attempts to hold a consistent view of the subject when taking up the Ethiopian case in the 1974-1991 period.

The study begins by considering the concept of national security, which basically signifies the protection of a state's vital interests from threats assessed by the regime in power, and that of military power, which is the capability of a state to employ its armed forces effectively in support of national security goals. The study also discusses and applies the realist approach to national security, which holds that national security is basically safeguarding a state's core interests (such as territorial integrity and political independence) from threats emanating from outside its borders and are primarily political and military in nature. Furthermore, the approach calls for a focus on military power considered to be, in peacetime as in wartime, the most essential element of national strength and security.

The study then presents the political dynamics of Ethiopia. The country was governed by an authoritarian and Marxist-Leninist leaning regime the policy-making responsibility of which was practically concentrated in the hands of one individual, namely Mengistu Haile Mariam. Plagued by political frictions and civil wars, the country grappled with numerous military and political threats, which were essentially ingrained in the Horn of Africa region. Against the backdrop of these threats, the post-1974 regime engaged in and maintained a high level of military spending,

vigilance and capability. The study emphasizes that the net result was the creation of probably

the largest and best equipped Armed Forces in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study also stresses that

the regime guided the Armed Forces by a doctrine largely based on the Soviet model, centralized

the High Command, conducted constant indoctrination and surveillance, and put its faith in the

accumulation of weaponry which was mainly provided by the Soviet Union.

The study finally notes that the Armed Forces were used in three ways. First and foremost, they

were employed for defense of the country against external aggression, forcing Somalia to desist its

invasion of the Ogaden in 1978. Secondly, the Armed Forces were used in a compellent role, as

applied to Somalia in 1982 through cross-border air raids and infantry-armored excursions to force

it to reverse its anti-Ethiopian activities. The third and last use of the Armed Forces was strategic

intelligence, which was concerned with the gathering and analysis of information on the

capabilities, vulnerabilities and probable courses of action of the states in the Horn of Africa, and

also involved carrying out covert operations such as the substantial military aid imparted to friendly

insurgent groups operating in Sudan and Somalia.

Introduction

1. The Background

Ethiopia is Africa's veteran independent state with its modern borders established at the end of the nineteenth century. Within these borders are contained disparate ethnic, religious and linguistic communities coexisting in more or less a condition of suspicion, if not hostility. Emperor Haile Selassie, who governed this state for almost five decades, formed and developed a modern military force. In 1974, in the midst of a genuinely popular revolution, some elements from this force wrenched political power out of the hands of the emperor, and established a politically intolerant and authoritarian regime, which became radically anti-Western.

Despite the change of regime, from 1974 to 1991, Ethiopia remained in a strategic position in the Horn of Africa. In fact, from the standpoint of the elements of national power which leading scholars of international relations use to determine a state's position in inter-state power struggles, Ethiopia was the most important state in the region. It had a large and growing population providing its support in time of crisis or war. Large in geographic size, Ethiopia was endowed with a militarily strategic hinterland constituted by high mountains serving as natural barriers to external military attacks. It was gifted with a variety of agro-ecological features, which are favorable for agricultural production. It was also well endowed with many natural resources, although lacking the capacity to utilize them. Ethiopia was, for instance, a veritable watertower, practically all states around it receiving Ethiopian water in varying degree. But,

above all, the post-1974 regime constructed the most potent military force in the contemporary Ethiopian history.

2. Statement of the Problem

From 1974 to 1991, the policy-makers of the post-1974 regime perceived the following as the main threats to Ethiopia's national security:

1. military threats from neighboring states: the post-1974 regime's perception of a military threat focused primarily on Somalia which strove for the outright annexation of the border area of the Ogaden, and to a lesser extent on Sudan. Both states were seen as possessing political leadership willing to and military forces able of launching credible military attacks on Ethiopia. Distant Egypt was also a military concern. But, rhetoric aside, the Egyptian threat was seen as involving its assistance to either Somalia or Sudan in developing their military capabilities rather than as a direct military threat.
2. political threats: neighboring states supported Ethiopian insurgent groups, which were mainly liberation movements, providing them military training, material support and territorial sanctuaries. Employing effectively this support, these groups represented strong immediate threat to the very survival of the post-1974 regime as well as to the state's territorial integrity.

Against the background of these threats, the post-1974 regime developed the largest and best equipped Armed Forces in Sub-Saharan Africa, on paper at least. Military expenditure amounted to a steady 10% of Ethiopia's Gross National Product annually (Eshetu, 1989:94). Estimates of

the personnel strength of the Armed Forces varied from 250,000 to 300,000.[1] The forces fielded an impressive and essentially Soviet-supplied order of battle with roughly: (1) 800 tanks, numerous armored cars and a wide range of artillery; (2) 150 combat aircraft, 50 helicopters and also numerous missiles of all kinds; (3) 2 frigates and a dozen of patrol craft (detailed and more precise figures are provided in Chapter Four).

Taking all these facts into account, this study will examine:

1. how Ethiopia's national security policy was made and evolved under the post-1974 regime;

2. how the post-1974 regime built up and sustained for seventeen years the formidable Armed Forces briefly described above;

3. what were the functions assigned to the Armed Forces by the post-1974 regime in its bid to guarantee Ethiopia's national security;

4. and, what were the reasons behind the Armed Forces' mixed record of successes and failures in performing these functions.

3. Hypothesis of the Study

The central hypothesis underpinning this study is that the post-1974 regime adopted and pursued a national security policy which involved the extensive use of the Armed Forces greatly expanded in size and capabilities.

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[1] Some authors advance figures between 500,000 and 1,100,000 (See Kinfe, 1994:9-10).

4. Method of Data Collection

The researcher consulted available and relevant books, journals and unpublished documents covering Ethiopia's foreign relations, Armed Forces as well as overall national security in the period in question.

5. Significance of the Study

There are numerous articles and books dealing with various aspects of Ethiopia's internal politics, foreign and military affairs in the 1974-1991 period. Yet, no researcher has attempted a comprehensive treatment of Ethiopia's national security per se, and of the direct link between national security and military power for that period. This study should be seen as a small step in filling that void, thus contributing to a better understanding by students and practitioners of national security as well as concerned citizens of past, present and even future Ethiopian security issues. It will also serve as a source of information and a catalyst for further studies on these really important issues.

6. Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides a framework of concepts and theoretical approaches to assist in understanding national security issues as well as military power. The second chapter is concerned with presenting the conditioning factors, the policy-

making process and main strategy of Ethiopia's national security. The third chapter deals with the historical background of the post-1974 Armed Forces and the organization of its High Command. The fourth part critically examines the Armed Forces' leadership and doctrine, and the force structure as well as the manpower and equipment characteristics of its three services. The fifth and final chapter unveils the actual uses of the forces for the sake of national security.

Chapter 1: The Study of National Security

1.1. The Rise of the Concept of National Security

The modern concept of national security did not arise all at once. Its formation was preceded by a process of systematizing ideas about the nature and aggressiveness of men, how men relate to each other, why they need to live in some sort of order, what constitutes a state, what is the state's primary function, and how states retain their conceptual and practical unity and continuity through various historical transformations. The actual origin of the concept of national security is, however, usually connected to the occurrence of World War II (its moral and military impact as well as the Cold War crises rising out of it) which accelerated the concept's intellectual development. This section will examine, in an abridged fashion, these philosophical and historical foundations of the concept of national security.

1.1.1. The Hobbesian View of Human Nature and Security

One theorist who made a serious attempt to put forward ideas pertaining to the concept of national security was Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes was a prominent English political philosopher who lived in seventeenth century England which was going "through a period of civil disturbance and political instability" (McNeilly, 1968:3). Spurred by this experience and his profoundly rooted fear of anarchy, Hobbes undertook the task of producing a theory of man and the state. He expounded his theory primarily in his best-known work entitled *Leviathan* and

published in 1651. The following is a brief presentation of Hobbes' theory rather than a comprehensive survey.

At the center of Hobbes' theory lies the concept of the original state of nature, which basically means the absence of social and political institutions, rules and regulations for orderly interaction, and sustained cooperation. In the state of nature lived man who, Hobbes held, is an intrinsically wicked and selfish (in the sense of always preferring his own happiness to that of others) creature who acts on his evil impulses, and is willing and capable of doing anything to better his position. According to Hobbes, man's life is a "perpetual and restless desire for power, that ceaseth only in death" (Hobbes, 1960:64). And power can only be obtained through conflict the sources of which Hobbes traced as follows.

First, men struggle for scarce resources, "competition" in his own words (McNeilly, 1960:161). Then, they must defend themselves and prevent others from taking away the power they have accumulated, "diffidence" (ibid:162). Finally, even when resources are not scarce and men are secure in their possessions, they seek the feeling of superiority which comes from having power over others, "glory" (ibid). These three sources of conflict set men against each other, and lead to a war "where every man is enemy to every man" (Hobbes, 1960:82). In such insecure conditions, Hobbes argued,

> There is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that are imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death (ibid).

In a famously striking phrase, Hobbes went on to add that, in the hazardously unpredictable state of nature, a man's life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (ibid).

To escape this situation of chronic insecurity and to curb their selfish and destructive tendencies, men came together and established the state, "that great Leviathan, or rather, to speak more reverently…that mortal god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defence" (ibid:112). Deriving from his premises on man's nature, Hobbes believed extensive authority must be given to the state whose most important function is "to preserve the society, to establish an internal order or peace, and to defend that peace against external violence" (Goldsmith, 1966:206).

Thus, the state is the only answer to man's search for survival and safety. This search everlastingly remains as man's primary preoccupation, Hobbes posited, although in the state "it tends to translate into a concern for security" (Zoll, 1963:152). Furthermore, Hobbes felt that states, like individual men, were selfishly motivated. Given the absence of a supreme external control, states are also engulfed in a constant struggle for power and wealth. To emphasize this point, Hobbes stressed that

> In all times, kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the…posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a posture of war (1960:83).

1.1.2. The Post-World War II Predicament

The concept of national security came into broad usage only after World War II −"the most deadly and destructive war in human history" (McWilliams et al, 1993:11) which took place almost three hundred years after Hobbes published *Leviathan*. During this war, in which 100 million men bore arms, around 70 million people lost their lives, the Soviet Union losing 27 million people, China 20 million, Poland 6 million, Germany 5.8 million, Japan 2.3 (ibid:12). Civil populations had particularly suffered representing over one-half of the dead. Ground military combat and indiscriminate aerial bombardment decimated around 12 million civilians while millions more perished of near-massacre executions, deprivations and bad sanitary conditions. Also, in an "unspeakable act of barbarism" (ibid), the Nazi regime of Germany systematically organized the extermination of political opponents and of the Jewish people with whom it had no objective conflict over territory, power or wealth (Stern, 1992). In total around 12 million people, of whom 6 million Jews, perished. The heavy toll in human life was matched by the enormity and severity of material destructions estimated at over 2 trillion dollars (ibd:14).

Equally to the magnitude of human and material loss, the use of atomic weapons shook the convictions and consciousness of policy-makers and academicians alike. On August 6, 1945, the US dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. About 140,000 people died immediately from the explosion and firestorm which followed, and also in the aftermath. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki where the dead numbered some 70,000 (ibid:15). From that point on, it became clear that man had attained the capacity to obliterate humanity, and that mankind's future was dependent on a continuing act of

self-restraint by the policy-makers of the states, which openly or secretly maintained more sophisticated nuclear weapons capable of reaching far beyond the traditional battlefield and with great velocity, and consequently of unthinkable effects not only on enemy armed forces but also on civilian populations and the environment (Freedman, 1981).

1.2. The Field of Study, Definition and Dimensions of National Security

National security refers both to a concept difficult for anyone encountering it for the first time, and to a particular field of study which provides "in itself, a more versatile, penetrating and useful way to approach the study of international relations than either power or peace" (Buzan, 1991:3). This section will trace the distinguishing characteristics of national security as a field of study, examine the different attempts to define the concept of national security, and then identify and clarify the concept's dimensions.

1.2.1. National Security as a Field of Study

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of an annihilating (deliberate or accidental) nuclear war led, in the US notably, to a vast outpouring of professional writings by military leaders and by civilian policy-makers as well as of books, articles and papers from academicians organized in research centers, foundations and think tanks which were established to develop theory and policies of national security affairs (Watson, 1990). In American universities, courses on national security proliferated at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and some programs even offered degrees in security studies. Yet, all these efforts and

institutions focused on the processes of the US' government organization as well as the major post-World War II policy problems facing it and primarily involving nuclear weapons, and the related protection against the threat of the Soviet Union as well as against Marxist-Leninist ideological expansion.

It followed that quantitatively speaking, the field of national security is overwhelmingly dominated by literature analyzing the security problems of the US – as attested by the writings which the researcher came across in the library of Addis Ababa University and other libraries (Wolfers, 1952; Turner et al, 1960; McNamara, 1968; Wolf, 1977; Pfaltzgraff et al, 1981; Brown, 1983; Jordan et al, 1989; Sorenson, 1990; Nacht et al, 1991; Snow, 1991; Allison et al, 1992). This undeniable fact led Jackson to contend that the concept of national security is nothing but a "US train of thought" (1992:82).

Wherever practiced, however, national security is a distinctive field within international relations. It differs from military science, which involves strategy and tactics in a narrower sense. Military science does not concern itself with policy-making processes at the pinnacle of state organizations, nor with the ways in which one state's policies interact in broad and long-term ways with another state's policies. Conversely, national security does not concern itself, as military science does, with such questions as air tactics and supremacy, deployment of naval fleets for battle, the proper use of armor on the battlefield, or operational analysis of military campaigns (Simpkin, 1985). Nevertheless, both national security and military science have one common characteristic, which is the two fields' sensitivity to the continuous change in military technology. Nuclear weapons are the most obvious factor of this change, but not the most

important one because the impact of technology went far beyond the threat to survival posed by such weapons.

The increasing flexibility and speed of twentieth century transportation and communications meant that states could expect no time to gather their strength and get ready to fight after a war had actually began. In preceding centuries, a war would start and then the belligerents would build up their armies, the Italo-Ethiopian Adwa war being a case in point. In the second half of the twentieth century, states had to plan on fighting a war with large, ever-ready and permanent military forces. The suddenness with which a state can be attacked by aircraft or missiles produced a kind of insecurity which never used to exist. This did not necessarily derive from nuclear weapons, although these weapons also created their own pervasive background insecurity. Many cities of Africa and the Middle East lie within twenty or thirty minutes' flight time from bases inside the territory of probable enemies. Hostile aircraft or missiles can appear overhead without warning, and, in the Middle East, this has happened more than once.

Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, provides a relevant example. It lies at least 1,600 kilometers away from the nearest Egyptian military airbase, a fact which could lead any percipient Ethiopian to assume that Addis Ababa is safe. Yet, Egypt has a highly developed weapons production capacity, second in the Middle East only to Israel. In mid-1997, it was learnt that Egypt has produced the Badr-Condor, a two-stage, solid fuel, inertially guided ballistic missile expected to deliver 700 kilograms payload over 1,700 kilometers, accurate within 100 meters (MoND, 1998; Lennox, 1998). The psychological sense that enemies and dangers are far away has vanished a long time ago. Because of this state of affairs, national security specialists,

like their military science counterparts, were forced to devote a significant amount of their time to monitor and evaluate present and projected weapon and other technical systems (Buzan, 1991:10).

Also, national security partially overlaps the traditional field of foreign policy, "the area of overlap between the two (residing) largely in alliance politics and coercive diplomacy" (Jordan et al, 1989:4). Furthermore, the two spheres of foreign policy and national security have "drawn closer together as strategic arms limitation talks began, political measures to contain East-West competition were launched, and international finance and multinational business became increasingly linked with international politics" (ibid). Yet, national security focuses more than foreign policy on the role of military force in the relations between states, and on the implications of changing military technology. It also tends to focus more than foreign policy on "policy" (Buzan, 1991:10): what should a state (for instance, Ethiopia) do about an existing or foreseeable threat (for instance, the likelihood of the above-described missile strike), and how should it go about deciding? Some authors, however, disagreed on just where the dividing lines should be drawn between the field of national security and the above-cited academic fields. Peterson, for example, suggested that national security is merely the study of "foreign policy in general and military policy in particular" (1992:58).

1.2.2. The Definition of National Security

Few concepts are more central to most aspects of modern life and at the same time semantically and conceptually imprecise, and thus immensely difficult to define than the concept of national

security. Yet, one is bewildered by the number and variety of definitions. Some authors defined it as the search for a state's safety in an unsafe world (Kegley et al, 1985:371). Another author suggested that it is "the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to protect its nature, institutions, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders" (Brown, 1983:4). Other authors indicated that national security entails the "range of physical threats that might arise for the nation and the force structures, doctrines and military policies mobilized to meet those threats…also those internal and external factors − such as economic or technological change − that might arise and whose direct and indirect effect would be to diminish or to enhance the nation's capacity to meet physical threats" (Nacht et al, 1991:xi).

Snow took a different but more useful route in trying to define the concept of national security. He began by looking "individually at the two words that compose the concept" (Snow, 1991:4). Snow began this exercise with the first word, national, and concluded that

> National security has traditionally emphasized the security of the [state] as its primary concern, hence the adjectival use of the term national. This emphasis reflects the political organization of the world into a system of [states]. Legally and politically, the world is divided into jurisdictions defined by state boundaries, and the highest form of authority is that of the [state]…Thus, if there is a political unit whose security needs to be guaranteed, it is the [state] (ibid).

Turning to the second word of the concept, security (derived from the Latin *securitas*, which is a variation of *securas*, meaning "without care"), he inferred from the word's dictionary definition, which stressed the "state or feeling of being free from fear, care or danger," the two aspects of national security − security as a physical condition, and security as a psychological one. He basically held that

The most obvious component of national security is protection of national boundaries from encroachment by other nations; this is a physical value so basic that no other goals can be pursued in its absence…But security is more than the objective physical state of being free from physical threat. It is also psychological: we are free from fear to the extent that we lack a feeling of fear (ibid:5).

All these definitions offer a useful insight. They all use the concept of national security to designate the policy (and process through which it is decided upon and carried out) which is initiated by the holders of state power to safeguard the state's "vital interests," which ordinarily include political independence, territorial integrity,[2] and a political and economic way of life − from physical threats which emanate outside its borders and are primarily military and political in nature (Krause, 1998:126; Buzan, 1991:5; Ayoob, 1995:5). Any interpretation of national security must include a brief sketch of the process of national security planning. In effect, this process, which almost all states in the world employ, is nothing more than an adaptation of classical problem solving techniques: define the problem, propose solutions, test the solutions and implement the best one. The process of national security planning, as a practical activity, consists of three functions. First, the state's vital interests to be safeguarded are defined. Second, threats to these interests are identified; this identification is basically the function of the state's intelligence apparatus in both its internal and external materialization. Third, a strategy of action is selected, with an eye on the available elements of national power which can be mobilized by the state.

1.2.3. The Dimensions of National Security

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[2] While territorial integrity implies that a state must be able to maintain control of the borders over which it claims jurisdiction, political independence presupposes that this jurisdiction must remain unchallenged.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned attempts, no exhaustive and precise definition of the concept of national security has won clear acceptance in academic circles; none may be possible! To employ Wolfers' characterization, national security is an "ambiguous symbol" which means widely different things to different people, and even "may never have any precise meaning at all" (Wolfers, 1952:135). This understanding is behind the pragmatic approach adopted by Job who tried to identify the salient "dimensions of contention that arise in considerations of security, and indicate how one's study of security in the Third World context is affected depending on the choices made on these dimensions" (Job, 1992:14). Applying Job's approach, three central and interrelated dimensions can be identified: the issue of the referent object of national security, the definition, perceptions and categorization of threats, and theoretical approaches (which will be treated in the next section).

(1) The "Whose Security?" Issue:

The first dimension lies in the fact that two distinct securities, which are not necessarily compatible and concordant, may be at issue concurrently: the security of the state or the security of the regime. Hence, the need to define and distinguish the terms "state" and "regime" arises. The term state, despite the academic wrangling about what it refers to, is the "commonly accepted unit of analysis in international relations" (Ayoob, 1995:6). For the purpose of security analysis, any definition of the state has to combine the term's two aspects. The external aspect is the fact that the state is the dominant type of actor in the international system, "each state with a distinct territorial base and exercising sovereignty" (Job, 1992:15).

When it comes to the internal aspect of the state, in most of the literature in social and political sciences, the state is usually defined as a centralized organization. This organization is led by the state's leadership, which has won the domestic political competition. In addition, it is composed of a set of numerous institutions, which includes the bureaucracy, judicial body and the coercive organs such as the police and the military,[3] as well as the laws and procedures by which they operate. The state possesses the authority to make and implement binding rules for the entire social groups and individuals banded together within its territorial confines. The state also has the monopoly in the use of force necessary for the sustenance of its control over the activities and interactions of these groups and individuals. Finally, the functions of the state are basically to maintain civil order, to settle disputes, to provide collective goods and services, and to render external defense.

The term regime refers to "the small set of persons who hold the highest offices in the state and/or are the elite that effectively commands the machinery, especially the coercive forces, of the state" (ibid). The security of the state cannot be properly separated from that of the regime when the state institutions, which provide considerable means of political reward, become themselves subject to political competition and maneuvering. After all, the body of persons who represent the regime captured the state's institutions after the political competition which inevitably grows up inside the state (a competition at times liable to external influence).

It is "often difficult to disentangle issues of state security from those of regime security in the Third World" (Ayoob, 1995:9) precisely because the main assets of a given regime are the

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[3] The military is invariably the most disciplined and strongest institution of any state.

control of the state organization itself (control or appropriation of the budget, of the means of coercion, of the system of public office appointments), and the expression of national security concerns. Indeed, Third World regimes, in most cases, unlawfully seize state power, are narrowly governed by an unrepresentative elite determined to stay in power indefinitely, do not tolerate open debate and public scrutiny, use repressive measures to induce the acquiescence and to reduce the potential challenges of citizens, may be facing overwhelming problems exceeding their capacities. And, they are naturally prone to manipulate national security concerns to consolidate their power position and sustain their political authority and viability, to legitimize their performance and justify high levels of military expenditure, to deflect popular hostility (or enlist popular support) and to divert attention from worrisome internal developments.

(2) Definition, Perceptions and Types of Threats:

The concept of threats is hard to pin down for two reasons. The first reason is the difficulty to perceive threats because, as any other hazardous human phenomenon, they lend themselves to bias and distortion (Buzan's "subjective-objective problem;" 1991:114) The second reason is "the difficulty to distinguish threats serious enough to constitute a threat to national security, from those that arise as normal day-to-day consequences of life in a competitive international environment" (ibid:115). Yet, to really make sense of national security as a policy problem, it is indispensable to define, even tentatively, the concept of threats.

This concept denotes primarily perceived challenges to a given state, to its "vital interests" such as its survival as an independent, territorially defined and viable socio-political entity, and also to

the organizing principles which determine the role and functions of the state's established institutions, and of the elites controlling them. This definition embraces only those challenges which "threaten to have political outcomes that either affect the survivability of state boundaries, state institutions, or governing elites or weaken the capacity of states and regimes to act effectively in the realm of both domestic and international politics" (Ayoob, 1995:9). It excludes less fundamental and diffuse challenges related to political, economic and other sectors, which do not essentially affect the territorial and institutional features of a state as well as the power position of a governing regime.

Threat perceptions result from the interaction of four factors. The specific mix of these elements, and thus the relevance of any of them, may differ over time and from state to state. And yet, all of them are present in the calculations of states, and would seem to constitute the substance of threat perceptions. The first element, which determines the nature and precision of threat perceptions, is the characteristic of the policy-making elites and their bureaucratic staff: individual personality traits, idiosyncrasies, relative competence, political judgement, search for glory, determination in pursuing goals etc. A second factor is the formulation of fundamental goals to be pursued at all cost, and the recognition of one's own vulnerabilities including: the permeability of borders to refugees, contraband or subversion; lack of popular support for the regime in power; presence of ethnic or rival political groups struggling with determination for change; lack of well-trained personnel in national security policy-making; external dependence; and, economic shortfalls.

A third factor is the more or less comprehensive picture a state develops of potential adversaries' current and future behavior. This picture can be deduced from the observed military capabilities of the potential adversaries, their size, structure and state of readiness. It can also be inferred from their apparent and declared intentions, which are expressed through authoritatively stated and publicly expounded policy declarations, and distinct signs of hostile intent. The fourth and final factor is the amalgam of the conditions affecting the international system as a whole. Conditions such as the pattern of power in the international system and the predictability in the behavior of its principal actors can aggravate or alleviate threat perceptions between individual states. They may provide favorable contingencies for aggressive acts on the part of potential opponents (such as the Somali invasion of the Ogaden area within Ethiopia) or for the realization of pursued goals. During the Cold War, for instance, the two superpowers, which were competing with each other with the greatest zeal in the Third World, often exacerbated threat perceptions in that part of the world (ibid:7).

The national security of a given state is exposed to two major types of threats. These are military threats and political threats. Military threats are "traditionally accorded the highest priority in national security concerns" (Buzan, 1991:117). The type of military threats varies from military intimidation in the form of harassment of fishing boats and punishment attacks to direct military actions such as territory seizures, full-scale invasions, and more injurious blockade and bombardment of the population (ibid:118). Military threat

> can, and usually does, threaten all the components of the state. It subjects the physical
> base to strain, damage and dismemberment, and it can deeply disrupt the ecosystem. It
> can result in the distortion or destruction of institutions, and it can repress, subvert or
> obliterate the idea of the state. Military actions not only strike at the very existence of
> the state's basic protective functions, but also threaten damage deep down through the

layers of social and individual interest which underlie, and are more permanent than, the state's superstructures…[And] certainly the ruling elite will be threatened (ibid:117).

In view of the fact that the state is an essentially political entity, political threats are as much dreaded as military threats, though not as lethal. Political threats are conceivably directed at the organizational stability of the state, and their aim "may range from pressuring the government on a particular policy, to fomenting secession and disrupting the political fabric of the state" (ibid:118-119). The common targets of political threats are the state's organizing principles or ideologies (in its search for economic development, national integration and influence beyond its borders), and its national identity. Political threats to national identity are more direct, involving "attempts to heighten the separate ethno-cultural identities of groups within the target state" (ibid:120). Political threats are themselves divided into two: intentional and structural political threats.

Intentional political threats are manipulations of the adversary's threat perceptions, using denial of diplomatic recognition or propaganda campaigns. National security concerns also result from structural political threats, which arise from the juxtaposition of conflicting organizing principles of two states in a context where they simply cannot ignore each other. Thus, the diametrically opposed political systems of the respective states "play a zero-sum game with each other whether they will it or not" (ibid:121). In the Third World, political threats invariably entail confusion between internal conflicts and national security. Internal conflicts, which abound in the Third World, are "frequently transformed into interstate struggles because of their spillover effect into neighboring, often similarly domestically insecure states" (Ayoob, 1995:7). The heart of the

matter is that internal conflicts are not isolated phenomena. On the contrary, internal conflicts and political struggles are inextricably entwined. Neighboring states are involved from the start in such conflicts, as ethnic bonds, consciousness, and interests extend across the Third World states' artificial borders. This involvement then quickly bestows on these conflicts the potential for growing into serious political threats, if not military threats.

1.3. Theoretical Approaches to National Security

In sharp contrast to many other fields of study involving the analysis of contemporary international and strategic issues, national security is a field dominated by policy analysis (as observed in the previous section) and relatively lacking in general theories. Most of the national security literature assumed explicitly a situational (policy-relevant) context similar to the one actually existing at the time of writing rather than concerning itself with developing theory or drawing general conclusions. Nonetheless, two divergent approaches trying to capture the essence of the national security problematique shine out. The following is a brief and partial review of these two approaches, the first of which is simpler in formulation and of central importance to this study while the second one is not on both counts.

1.3.1. The Orthodox Approach

The realist approach, or the orthodox approach as it is known in the national security literature, "has dominated the field of security studies" (Job, 1992:16). This approach concentrates on the state, its concern being how states relate and interact with one another. In fact, it attributes

exclusively notions of national security to the state, which is taken as the primary actor in the international system. Its preeminent role in military affairs, its macro-level regulatory authority, its penetration of society, its control over natural and human resources, its formidable capacity to rally citizens around a common goal are all given as reasons to support this claim. It defines basically the state as an independent territorially bounded political entity, which is the principal repository of political loyalty and legitimacy.

The approach's standard argument is that a state sets its policies in response to the challenges of a frequently hostile environment in which its survival can be ensured only through its own efforts. Although a state can pursue a variety of goals, security is the supreme goal the attainment of which permits all other goals to be pursued for without the state's capacity to protect itself from politico-military threats no other goal can be realized. At this point, the realist approach extends the concept of power to the security field. It is inclined "to see security as a derivative of power: an actor with enough power to reach a dominating position would acquire security as a result" (Buzan, 1991:2).

Thus, states struggle for power in a competitive manner; to put it in another way, interstate relations are simply defined as a struggle for power. This idea of a struggle for power is predicated on a common understanding of the concept of power. Morgenthau, who was the chief exponent of the realist approach, contended that "power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man" (1985:11). He also asserted that each state's policies reflect both the struggle for power and an awareness of its own power position in relation to other states. For Morgenthau, and for the realists in general, irrespective of its internal political

make-up, or for that matter the individual personalities of its leaders and citizens, a state ceaselessly seeks to maximize its own power (maximization understood as acting to ensure the greatest degree of power attainable over the course of time) to guarantee its security.

1.3.2. The Revisionist Approach

In the late 1980s, when the cracks began to widen in the geopolitical structure of the Cold War (which meant that the nuclear standoff between the superpowers no longer dictated the terms of the security debate), a cadre of revisionists challenged the earlier described and deeply entrenched orthodox approach. They suggested that national security could not be confined within the narrow confines of the state, and sought to shift the focus of attention to the "borderless realm of humanity" and its fragile habitat. They promoted the inclusion, within a new broader conception of national security, of a wide range of non-military phenomena such as economic disruption, population growth, environmental degradation and migration (Krause, 1998:126).

This wave of revisionism was, as a matter of fact, inaugurated by a leading American environmentalist named Lester Brown in a paper entitled "Redefining National Security" and written in 1977. In this paper, which would serve as an archetype for similarly themed essays, Brown established a long list of security threats including climatic change, soil erosion, food shortages, and deforestation. To this list, Ullman added other phenomena such as epidemics, floods, droughts and earthquakes (1983:126). Although acknowledging the continuing salience

of the traditional security agenda, Ullman promoted the shift in focus away from concerns about the state, arguing that mankind shared a destiny which transcended national borders.

The arguments advanced by Ullman were to be taken seriously after the update of his article accomplished by Jessica Mathews in 1989. Mathews articulated in this work an expansive conception of national security. Observing that "accepted definitions of the limits of national security as coinciding with national borders is obsolete" (Mathews, 1989:174), she argued that economic, environmental and social challenges are as important as those of a purely military nature. She also stated that these challenges, which presented existential threats to human survival and the earth's ecosystem (not just to the survival of the state or the state system), were beyond the influence and resources of any one state to solve. She recognized at the same time that overcoming the tendency to think about national security mainly in terms of military preoccupations is not going to be easy, and that it will require "social and institutional inventions comparable in scale and vision to the new arrangements conceived in the decade following World War II" (ibid).

This line of argument undoubtedly offered an opportunity to reexamine the major features of (and formulations about) national security, and helped to make clear the critical relationships between the most daunting challenges to human survival: poverty, environmental degradation and rapid demographic change. Regardless of its merit, the attempt of the proponents of the revisionist approach to redefine the concept of national security threatened the latter's intellectual coherence, running "the risk of rendering the term too elastic, thereby detracting seriously from its utility as an analytical tool" (Ayoob, 1995:9). Their disregard for the centrality

of the state stemmed from a clear lack of insight as well as environmental prejudices. The promoters of this line of reasoning were indeed associated with environmental institutions – Brown was president of World Watch Institute, Mathews vice-president of World Resources Institute. All in all, the proponents of the revisionist approach failed to capture the imagination and the support of either academicians or policy-makers worldwide.

1.4. The Nature of Military Power and its Role in National Security

Starting from the widely held view that "military power lies at the heart of the national security problem" (Buzan, 1991:270), the following section will furnish the answers required by some central questions regarding military power. What is exactly military power? What are its components? And, how is military power employed to achieve the national security goals of a state?

1.4.1. The Definition and Components of Military Power

Two assumptions are cherished by the realist or orthodox approach. The first assumption is that national security is a function of a state's power or better national power. National power is viewed as the capability of a state to influence the security policy behavior of other states, and also as an amalgam of a number of standard elements such as geography, population, economic strength, natural resources, national character, political leadership, strategy and cohesion, and finally military power. The second assumption is that national power is a function of military

power. Military power is viewed as the most obvious, the most applicable and the most crucial element of national power.

Howard defined military power as "the capacity to use violence for the protection, enforcement or extension of authority" (1970:46), and went on to add that it "remains an instrument with which no state has yet found it possible completely to dispense" (ibid). One authoritative figure on the subject, Knorr, asserted that military power is "ultimately the power to destroy and kill, or to occupy and control, and hence to coerce. In the international system, military power – like other forms of influence – is a relation among states that permits one government to induce another to behave in a way which the latter would not have chosen freely" (1970:50). Despite these attempts, the concept of military power is not amenable to precise interpretation, and is usually used interchangeably with "armed forces." In this study, for the purpose of convenience, military power is defined as the capability of a state to employ its armed forces effectively in support of national (security) goals, and to concurrently exert influence on the performance of other states (Dupuy, 1974:vii).

Closely interrelated (and thus illustrated in a highly generalized manner and not in order of importance), the following factors can be considered as the key components which make up the military power of a state (Barrows, 1985:102-115; Jordan et al, 1989:26-27; Dupuy, 1974:vii-ix):

1. force size and structure: how large are the armed forces in terms of forces in being? How large is the army or ground force as compared to the air force or the navy? How many active units are deployed in the various branches, and how are the units structured and equipped?

2. quantity and quality of equipment: what types and how many weapon systems are at the disposal of the armed forces? What are the potential of these weapons in terms of range, accuracy, lethality, survivability and reliability?

3. logistics (especially supply): how are feeding, clothing, housing and medical activities conducted? Given the fact that military units can carry only a limited amount of equipment with them, and that they must be supplied if they are to remain operational for more than a few days, how developed and efficient are the systems of supply?

4. mobility (closely related to logistics): how quickly and using what means could troops, equipment and supplies be moved to strategically and tactically important locations?

5. doctrine [a doctrine is basically a single document encompassing "principles, policies and concepts, applicable to a subject, which are derived from experience or theory, compiled and taught for guidance" (DoA, 1961:201); it can also be seen as "the expression of the accepted views of a state regarding the problems of political evaluation of future war, the state attitude toward war, a determination of the nature of future war, preparation of the country for war in the economic and moral sense, and regarding the problems of organization and preparation of the armed forces, as well as the methods of waging war" (Sokolovskiy, 1968:38)]: what is the quality of the doctrine of force deployment and military engagement which fundamentally control the employment of all military units?

6. education, training and skills: what is the level of education of the forces in being? How proficient are soldiers in employing their weapons under varying conditions? How physically able are they to make use of geographical factors, and intellectually able to gain critical combat information?

7. military leadership (the command structure and staff): how able are the military leaders in bridging the gap between the officers and regular soldiers (constituting the chain of command through which orders are issued and carried out), and also between the various branches of the armed forces as a whole? Are military leaders receptive to innovation and change, are they flexible enough in military strategy and tactics? What is their capacity to analyze and correctly assess military intelligence information? What is their capacity to correctly anticipate the type of conflict in which the armed forces are likely to be engaged, to prepare the forces adequately and appropriately to meet the most probable kind of conflict, and to follow through with appropriate execution?

8. morale (and motivation): what is the level of military units' morale, which is a function of many variables and absolutely vital to success in combat[4]?

9. national leadership and will: what are the levels of resolve and capacity of the political leadership in coordinating the employment of the armed forces in various contexts, and in organizing and allocating national resources effectively? How prepared and committed would the population be to endure the deprivations which could result from sustained and large-scale military activities (throughout their duration)?

10. foreign military assistance: what is the level and quality of assistance provided by foreign military powers in terms of the training of military units, the provision of weapon systems and supplies?

11. intelligence effectiveness: does military intelligence provide sufficiently accurate, timely and relevant information on the assets, positions and intentions of an extant or potential enemy?

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[4] In both the 1967 and 1973 Israeli-Arab wars, the high morale of the Israeli forces, fighting what they perceived to be wars of survival, more than offset the numerical and firepower superiority of their Arab opponents.

12. military tradition: how pervasive and strong are the various factors which play a part in forming this tradition and underlying militarism?

13. performance during military campaigns: what are the relative strengths and weaknesses of military units during internal and foreign campaigns?

1.4.2. National Security Functions of Military Power

The national security functions of military power fall under three categories. First, military power can be employed for defense in the traditional sense (the most vaunted of its functions). This basic role involves forcing an aggressor state to abandon an initiated physical invasion by prevailing militarily or emerging victorious. Secondly, military power can be used in a compellent role, which involves using certain military means (short of large-scale war) to force an opponent to do something it would not otherwise do. The means of compellence include cross-border air raids and infantry forays (to destroy installations and equipment and inflict minor casualties), bombardment of a town, the imposition of a blockade, deployment of military forces (such as movements of troops, sending aircraft aloft, putting ships to sea) in situations other than regular peacetime maneuvers, or issuance of an explicit warning to use military force. The goal here is "to hurt an adversary to the degree that it determines that further pursuit of its course of action would incur increasing costs incommensurable with any possible gain" (Jordan et al, 1989:28).

The third and final national security function of military power is strategic intelligence. Strategic intelligence is concerned with the collection and analysis of information on foreign states'

capabilities, vulnerabilities and probable courses of action, without which policy-makers are forced to make national security decisions blindfolded. It also involves carrying out covert operations, which predominantly take the form of secret but substantial military aid (advising, training, weapons, logistical support) to friendly insurgent groups operating in a given state, which is antagonized with the supporting state by border disputes, ideological divide, balance of power logic or the need to share scarce resources (ibid: 130-133 and 140).

Chapter Two: Ethiopia's National Security Policy (1974-1991)

2.1. Internal and Regional Conditions

In the 1974-1991 period, Ethiopia's national security policy was formulated and implemented within particular internal and regional conditions, which had direct bearing on its substance, quality, timing and outcome. They are treated at length in this section.

2.1.1. Political Development in Revolutionary Ethiopia

For the most part of the 1960s and the early 1970s, political opposition had developed to the autocratic regime of Emperor Haile Selassie. Besides ill-organized and ill-fated plots, conspiracies, peasant rebellions and the 1960 coup d'état, there was spreading student opposition to the old regime. The students gave prominence to the exigency for land reform as well as the pressing need to do away with the incompetence and corruption of the regime's senior officials (Bahru, 1991:209-226). The old regime's credibility was crucially undermined by its indifferent handling of the 1972-1974 devastating famine, which reportedly claimed the lives of 200,000 people in the Tigray and Wello provinces. A marked increase in food prices and petroleum products in early 1974 followed the famine. Moreover, the regime's failure to quell insurgency in the province of Eritrea exposed its weakness. This state of affairs led to a wave of mutinies in the Armed Forces, labor strikes and intensified student demonstrations in Addis Ababa, and ultimately to the Ethiopian Revolution.

In February 1974, in an attempt to stem the tide of growing unrest, a new cabinet took office to implement reforms. But, in subsequent months, continuous mutinies among the Armed Forces occurred and substantive reforms were not carried out. Thus, in June 1974, the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces (Derg in Amharic) was formed, with its original members assumed to be 120 (the majority of whom were graduates of the Holeta Military School), and effectively took over political power. It began by arresting leading aristocrats, top military officials and political figures of the old regime, forcing the new cabinet's resignation, and ended up deposing the emperor in September 1974. In place of the old regime, a Provisional Military Administrative Council was set up by the Derg (Halliday et al, 1981:82-88).

The PMAC was initially headed by Lieutenant General Aman Andom, who had "proved himself as commander of the Third Division when Somalia attempted to invade Ethiopia at the end of the early sixties" (Teferra, 1997:140). However, the PMAC was racked by violent internal power struggles between rival factions on how best to organize and lead the country. Disputes on how to deal with the Eritrean problem led to the killing of the general in November 1975, immediately followed by the execution of fifty-seven officials and dignitaries of the old regime. General Aman's successor, Brigadier General Teferi Banti, met the same fate in February 1977 following a gun battle at the Derg's main office. The liquidation of Brigadier General Teferi was followed by the purge in November 1977 of Lieutenant Colonel Atnafu Abate, the second vice-chairman of the Derg, marking the concentration of power in the hands of Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam (Halliday et al, 1981:113-114).

Under the influence of leftist intellectuals returning from abroad, the PMAC opted for a Marxist-Leninist ideology or model. Ethiopia was declared a socialist state in December 1974, and within two months around 100 industrial and commercial companies were nationalized or partly taken over. Then, in March 1975, all rural land was nationalized, followed by urban land four months later. A network of peasant and urban dwellers associations was established, and, along with the ensemble of mass organizations and trade unions, a pervasive secret police, became a key tool of political control. Also, about 50,000 students were sent to the countryside to conduct a literacy campaign, and initiate community development projects (Ottaway(s), 1978:63-80). Nevertheless, there was much unrest throughout the country.

First of all, war escalated in Eritrea, where the bulk of the Armed Forces was bogged down as the insurgent groups there intensified their offensives after 1975, gaining control of almost the entire province and besieging Asmera. Secondly, peasant uprisings and a low-intensity war conducted by the monarchist Ethiopian Democratic Union plagued the northwestern parts of the country while numerous armed insurrections proliferated in other parts. Thirdly and finally, dissimilar ideological currents clashed and degenerated into open street battles between the regime and leftist movements, which went underground. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, which was founded in the incipient days of the Ethiopian Revolution and which commanded considerable student support, wanted the soldiers to go back to the barracks by leaving the revolution to the civilians, and supported self-determination for the country's minorities, launched an urban guerrilla warfare involving the systematic assassination of the military regime's supporters. In response, the regime unleashed a murderous campaign of "Red

Terror," which claimed thousands of lives; mass arrests, torture and summary executions were the norm (Teferra, 1997:200-202).

After these turbulent years, the Derg managed to extend its control throughout the country, and, with the encouragement of the Soviet Union, to set up and inaugurate with great pomp the Workers' Party of Ethiopia in 1984. In that same year, however, a catastrophic famine swept northern Ethiopia; the post-revolution regime, just like the old regime a decade earlier, took no action until foreign news agencies reported the tragedy (ibid:254-255). Then, in order to give the post-1974 regime a semblance of popular legitimacy, and to provide it a structural base for the political reality of its "civilianization" and "Marxist-Leninization," a Soviet-style constitution was adopted in February 1987, and a one-party form of state, the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopian was institutionalized in September 1987. The PDRE was a unitary state, whose organs were supposed to be governed by the principle of "democratic centralism" (Article 4, Section 1; PDRE, 1988:57).

Paradoxically, as the post-1974 regime completed its transition into an ostensibly civilian Marxist-Leninist regime, Soviet ideological and military support began to wane, and it became increasingly fragile. As a matter of fact, fatally weakened by three years of military reversals in Eritrea and Tigray, the loss of internal legitimacy, the absence of political accountability, escalating corruption and its inability to spur economic development, the regime yielded in 1991 to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (a motley coalition created in 1989 and dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front).

2.1.2. The Horn of Africa as a Security Complex

Ethiopian national security policy was, by and large, influenced by the dynamics within the Horn of Africa (the most conflict-ridden region on the African continent). Explaining regional dynamics is necessarily an arbitrary exercise for any student of international relations, depending on which elements appear to him as most significant. The best the author of this study could do was to settle on the interpretation provided by Barry Buzan, which is comprehensive and adaptable enough to meet general acceptance, and then try to apply it to the Horn of Africa.

(1) The Concept of Security Complex:

In the first place and in security terms, a region "means that a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other" (Buzan, 1991:188). Thus, regional influence on national security partly stems from the fact that military and political threats (discussed in Chapter One) are more significant, potentially imminent and strongly felt when states are at close range. Buzan stressed that regional security subsystems can be seen in terms of balance of power as well as patterns of amity, which are relationships involving genuine friendship as well as expectations of protection or support, and of enmity, which are relationships set by suspicion and fear arising from "border disputes, interests in ethnically related populations, to long-standing historical links, whether positive or negative" (ibid:190).

These patterns are, according to Buzan, to a large extent confined in a particular geographical area. He used the term security complex to designate the ensuing formation; security complex is thus "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that, their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another" (ibid). The question is, does the Horn of Africa form a security complex? Given the following factors, the answer is yes.

(2) Delineating the Horn of Africa:

In a narrow geographic sense, the Horn of Africa is that northeastern part of the African continent, which faces in the east the Red Sea, in the southeast the Indian Ocean, and in the west the Nile Valley. The Horn of Africa conventionally comprises of the states of Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti, though it embraces geopolitically the adjoining states of Sudan and Kenya. It should also be pointed out that Egypt is not less involved in the issues and processes of the region. All these states share social and cultural values emanating from a centuries-old tradition of interrelationships, common religious practices and economic linkages. Furthermore, the political fate of each state in the area has always been inextricably intertwined with that of neighboring states. Indeed, no state in the Horn of Africa has been effectively insulated from the problems of the other states no matter how distant; for instance, instability in one state easily created instability in the rest.

(3) The Colonial Legacy:

At the end of the nineteenth century, the European colonial powers partitioned the previously free constituent parts of the Horn of Africa, joining into territorial units unrelated areas and peoples. The establishment of new states (Sudan got its independence in 1956, British and Italian Somalilands in 1960, Kenya in 1963, and Djibouti in 1977 while Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia) was thus based on misdrawn borders, which basically ignored ethnic, cultural, historical and religious groups' natural lines. And, consequently, it resulted in internal conflicts (in particular demands for autonomy from ethnic groups) as well as in the governments of the newly independent states lodging territorial claims in turn leading to conflict with other states.

The challenge was compounded by the fact that the framework of colonial laws and institutions had been designed to exploit local divisions rather than to overcome them. Colonialism also disrupted the political, social and economic lives of pastoral societies. The emergence of colonial ports as well as the development of modern transport systems disrupted the ancient trade networks on which pastoralists depended, coastal markets disappearing in many cases. Moreover, transportation networks and related physical infrastructure were designed to satisfy the needs of the metropolitan country rather than to support the balanced growth of an indigenous economy. During the same period, by taking advantage of inter-European rivalries, the Ethiopian rulers doubled through conquest the geographic size of their independent state built on the interior highlands. A vast and multi-ethnic state was created there. The need to maintain intact the unity of this fragile and disparate entity led to the excessive centralization of political

and economic power, which in turn stimulated widespread infringement upon local cultures, and led to religious coercion and political suppression.

(4) Political and Economic Problems:

In the Horn of Africa, the nature of state power is a key source of conflict, political victory assuming a "winner-takes-all" form with respect to wealth and resources, and the prestige and prerogatives of office. Insufficient accountability of leaders, lack of transparency in regimes, non-adherence to the rule of law, absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership, lack of respect for human and peoples' rights made political control excessively important and the stakes dangerously high. Also, given the highly personalized milieu in which politics operates in the Horn of Africa, it was possible for a pretentious leader, in the likes of Mengistu, Nimeiri or Bare, to shape the political destiny of a state almost single-handedly, and to enter into warm or conflictual relations with other states. In fact, despite the devastation they brought, such leaders used conflicts to divert popular impatience to their inability to improve conditions.

Moreover, political competition in the Horn of Africa is usually not rooted in viable economic systems. All of the region's states are barely capable of reaching a level of economic development at which even the basic needs of their populations are met. Economic activities are strongly skewed towards primary commodities for export, which are subject to the whims of the fluctuating prices of the international commodity market. Economic activities are also hampered by external dependence, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of capital, shortage of skilled manpower and misguided development policies. What's more, the state is unable to provide

adequate health and education services, and to remedy mass unemployment, which partly results from high population growth.

(5) Access to Shared Resources:

Even though the states of the Horn of Africa are independent of each other, "there may have to be a sharing of resources. An obvious example is the flow of a river…but shared resources may also be reflected in the cross-border movements of pastoralists" (Woodward, 1996:118). The most prominent river is the Nile River, which has always been an intricate part of Horn of Africa politics. Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt are geographically partly owners and users of the river, and all three consider it as a major national security issue. In addition, pastoralists have to be constantly on the move looking for areas that offer better water and grass. However, the creation of artificial borders and the consolidation of states, which are primarily interested in controlling all movements and imposing taxes, limited the size of available resources and disrupted the traditional movement patterns of pastoral societies (Markakis, 1993). Armed conflicts, negative state policies and recurrent drought led to an environmental crisis and the militarization of pastoral societies, which in turn resulted in inter-ethnic and inter-state tensions.

 (6) The Logic of Intra-Regional Subversion and Alliances:

The states of the Horn of Africa took advantage of every local tension or conflict to support insurgencies in neighboring states. Sponsoring subversive activities had simply become a customary tool poised to destabilize and endanger the national security of another state. This

enhanced inter-state rivalries, mutual suspicion and the development of an eye-for-an-eye mentality. One example is the "long and bloody game of tit-for-tat" (Woodward, 1996:119) which developed between Ethiopia and Sudan. Sudan's support for Ethiopian insurgent groups was the reason why the Sudan People's Liberation Army enjoyed strong and sustained support from the post-1974 Ethiopian regime (a subject which is treated in Chapter Five).

The formation of alliance, which is part of the balance of power system, is a strategy devised (and implemented) in conjunction with regional or external partners, and assigned to prevent or contain external disruptions of national security from occurring, and to establish a viable equilibrium of forces in a region (Buzan, 1991:189). In the Horn of Africa, regional alliances had a relative restraining influence, but gave equally additional momentum for inter-state antagonism. One classical alliance behavior is provided by the alliances and counter-alliances which emerged in the late 1970s, during which an upsurge of violent conflicts occurred in the region. US-supported Egypt, engaged in conflict with Soviet-supported Libya, helped Sudan and Somalia. Ethiopia, which was drawn into the socialist camp, fought Somalia, confronted Sudan and got associated with Libya by the 1981 Aden Treaty. Somalia was supported by Egypt and Sudan in its claims on Ethiopian territory. Sudan, backed especially by Egypt, stood against its neighbors, Libya and Ethiopia. And, Libya, which was not directly involved in territorial or other disputes in the Horn of Africa, helped the enemy (Ethiopia) of its enemy's (Egypt) allies, Sudan and Somalia (Imru, 1989:38-40).

(7) The Horn of Africa's Strategic Importance and Superpower Interference:

The Horn of Africa has never acquired a strategic importance for its raw materials, for the potential markets within it or for any other continental advantage (ibid:55). Indeed, the region has always been allotted a relatively important strategic value owing to its proximity to the Red Sea, which is an important and expeditious route of international trade and communications between Europe, the Middle East and the Far East as well as the navigation route through which oil is transported from the Persian Gulf (where the largest oil deposits of the world are located) to consumers in North America and Europe (Legum, 1985:193). Hence, the states of the Horn of Africa were forced into economic, political and military dependence on either one of the two superpowers of the Cold War – the US and the Soviet Union. Competing to establish positions of influence and military advantage in the strategically significant regions of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the two superpowers supported client states in the adjacent Horn of Africa primarily by injecting military aid, and undermined inimical states by supporting subversive activities and weaving unfriendly alliances.

The interests of the US can be explained in terms of securing access to oil for the West in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. It was thus in the interests of the US to fend off any expansion of Soviet power and influence, whether through proxies or not, in the Middle East, Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa. Conversely, the Soviet Union aimed at promoting its credibility as a superpower by influencing and overarming the largest number of strategically placed client states (Imru, 1989:57), at imperiling oil tankers bound to the West via the Suez Canal, and at reducing to nil the influence of the US in the above mentioned regions.

Geopolitical logic also required the Soviet Union, which needed to have maritime staging areas for its rapidly increasing navy, to control the arc running from the Indian subcontinent to the Horn of Africa (Halliday, 1982).

2.2. National Security Policy-Making in Ethiopia after 1974

Ethiopia's national security policy was not merely a pre-determined result of the above-mentioned internal and regional conditions. More accurately, these conditions influenced the policy through the variables of the policy-making process, including the nature of the political leadership, its modality of rule and the institutional context of decisions. The following section presents a broad perspective of these variables.

2.2.1. Mengistu's Managerial Style

The Ethiopian political tradition bequeathed maximum power to the extent feasible to one single leader, and concurrently favored personality cults. Haile Selassie, for instance, was the centerpiece of the state, tightly maintaining decision-making power, even over matters of limited importance (Markakis, 1974:216). Mengistu, after consolidating his hold on power after 1977, gradually became a figure in the mainstream of this tradition, virtually emulating his predecessor in many aspects (Dawit, 1989:49, 56 and 59; Clapham, 1988:79). Indeed,

> Though Mengistu is a very different kind of person from Haile Selassie, and the institutions he has set up are a world removed from those of the old regime, the practices of the two are in many respects similar. Decision-making in the imperial regime ultimately reached a point of strangulation because all matters of any importance, and many of none, had to be referred to the Emperor, and as the Emperor

aged he lost the ability to deal with such a heavy burden…Mengistu has deliberately sought to exercise tight and very comprehensive control over all the major branches of government and policy (Korn, 1986:106).

Although reputed to be intelligent and hard working, Mengistu was dogmatic, rigid, vengeful, cruel and authoritarian in personality, and lacked personal magnetism, powers of oratory, sense of diplomacy and political timing (ibid:114; Dawit, 1989:48). His primary concern was the centralization and retention of power at all costs. Indeed, "everything Mengistu has done since 1977 has been with one ultimate goal in mind: to place himself in a position of uncontested power with absolute control over the lives of everyone in Ethiopia" (ibid:56). Thus, in all state affairs, he adopted an interventionist managerial style. Making his own final assessment from the intelligence gathered and presented directly to him by the state's intelligence agencies, he alone established all priorities and made all the decisions. He was incapable of delegating authority, and simply centralized the whole policy-making machinery of the state, and "by simply giving orders, he expected everyone and everything to fall into step like marchers on a drill field" (ibid:49). Already not susceptible to building consensus or to a judicious balancing of contrary opinions, he visibly became intolerant of contrary opinions or "any sort of criticism" (ibid:50).

He was "reluctant to accept advice or counsel" (ibid:59) from his handpicked advisers and ministers. He manifested arrogance and domineering behavior towards them, sidestepped their recommendations, and mistreated them when they cautiously suggested alternatives to his usually aggressive and impulsive approach to all state affairs, and pointed out the repercussions of his policies. Mengistu had simply "introduced a rigidity in policy-making which Haile Selassie was able to avoid. Once government policies become personally associated with the

leader, they cannot be questioned without seeming to challenge the leader's own authority" (Clapham, 1988:80). Thus, Mengistu's apprehensive ministers "refuse to make decisions, for the penalty for the wrong move can be quite severe…[and] do not venture dissenting opinions" (Korn, 1986:106-107). Expatriate advisors associated with the regime since 1977 (mostly Soviets) have sought to influence on a regular basis Mengistu and thus the entire policy process. Yet, they "had to learn the hard way that Mengistu was not someone they could order around" (ibid:97).

Even if very little was written and known about the inner workings of the Ethiopian national security policy-making, it is apparent that the personal managerial style of Mengistu had an important bearing on it. Mengistu, who doubtless viewed himself as a competent originator and manager of all policies (Dawit, 1989:59), made decisions and pronouncements on all aspects of national security policy, without having consulted civilian and military professionals, who had the appropriate training and experience in the area of national security policy formulation and management. Indeed, the state's cadre of professionals had not assumed its proper function (offering the experimentation, reflection and deep probing which the complex problems of national security policy required), precisely because its most senior and competent personnel were continuously purged (or preferred self-imposed exile) after the revolution, and were only replaced by docile political appointees. It followed that national security became the victim of Mengistu's impulse, and was not carefully thought out, both in the short and long terms.

2.2.2. The Institutional Context

To put it briefly, the national security policy-making process was not handled through well-established institutional channels, though there were standard institutions which only acted as supporting mechanisms. In the first place, a number of advisory bodies (which are examined at length in Chapter Three) were created after 1977 to coordinate the formulation and supervise the implementation of Ethiopia's national security policy, although the emphasis was more on purely military affairs. These bodies were not, however, able to achieve significant leverage by virtue of their lack of explicit purpose within the framework of a highly personalized and centralized system, and scant organizational resources. Indeed, they had no bureaucratic structures designed to solicit and incorporate assessed data as they were apparently staffed only with rudimentary administrative and research sections. The omnipresence of variegated military threats, the ensuing expansion of the Armed Forces, and the fact that military officers held the highest state and party offices facilitated the participation of the Ministry of Defense (also investigated in detail in Chapter Three), which was subordinated to these bodies, in the formulation of national security policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the operational arm of any government in the conduct of foreign relations, and customarily serves as a source of information and advice on major aspects of national security policy, found itself marginalized, if not excluded, from decision-making. Dawit Wolde Giorgis, who was Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, remarked that his staff was not consulted as much as they should have been given their wide experience "in the realities of international diplomacy…[and were] reduced to sending out communiqués and press releases

and writing justifications of decisions made by Mengistu" (ibid:36-37). Thus, the ministry used to execute and represent policy rather than formulate it. Just as "foreign policy-making and diplomacy were assumed to be the Emperor [Haile Selassie]'s preserve and not matters of institutional decision-making of the ministry [of Foreign Affairs]" (Negussay, 1977:52), the post-revolution Ministry of Foreign Affairs was "no more than the governmental agency responsible for implementing decisions already reached" (Clapham, 1988:233). The defective aspect of this system was reflected in that it was the same case for the Foreign Affairs Minister whose role was practically limited to accompanying Mengistu on his foreign tours or at his announcements of a policy he had decided upon, after having conceived his options alone. Furthermore, the minister's role as well as access to Mengistu depended largely on whether he had prior close association with him or not (ibid).

The post-revolution regime had "expanded its intelligence agencies at an even faster rate than it expanded its armed forces" (Pateman, 1995:56). It possessed two separate, at times competing, agencies which undertook intelligence activities pertaining to national security: the Military Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Defense (to be reviewed in Chapter Three), and the Public Security Organization (the primary civilian intelligence-gathering, counter-intelligence and surveillance agency) under the aegis of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was first established as the Ministry of Public Safety and Security in August 1978. The new agency merged the old regime's intelligence elements the high-ranking officers of which were purged. Because of their specialized knowledge, however, low-ranking intelligence officers were retained in their positions. After 1978, the Soviet KGB and the East German State Security

Service (ibid:57), which were both very effective intelligence services, provided organizational, material and training assistance to the new Ethiopian intelligence agency.

The Public Security Organization was organized along the lines which the two services recommended, was supplied sophisticated surveillance equipment and cars, and their training focused on surveillance and interrogation. The danger was that the training schemes of both the Soviets and East Germans involved a deliberate attempt to train differently from their standard training methods, and to gain knowledge of the Ethiopian trainees' capabilities and propensities in order to coopt them and penetrate their agency. On the other hand, the Soviets and East Germans had their activities "carefully monitored and circumscribed" (Henze, 1985:34), and "did not have a totally trouble-free ride in Ethiopia. [For instance] in 1986, Ivan Pavlovski, First Secretary in charge of KGB operations, and another diplomat were expelled" (Pateman, 1995:58). Nonetheless, there was a steady and smooth information exchange among these friendly services, the Ethiopian agency able to economize its efforts in areas beyond its financial and experience scope, and the other two services obtaining access to Ethiopian investigations and reports.

Since its inception in 1978 up to 1991, the agency was directly answerable to Colonel Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, who was appointed Minister of Public Safety and Security and then Minister of Internal Affairs. Tesfaye was favored because he was close to Mengistu, who "is said to have been the best man at his wedding" (Clapham, 1988:113); thus, he had direct and unfettered access to Mengistu, who was involved in the approval process of all major operations. In addition, he had the background to secure the efficiency of the intelligence-gathering agency. He

was a career intelligence officer, who joined the Holeta Military School in 1959, and, after a couple of years in military intelligence, was sent to Israel (1963) and the US for further training (ION, 1985:88). The main functions of the agency included: ensuring internal security and control (watching and neutralizing individuals and organizations, both inside and outside government structure, capable of posing a threat to the regime and the state); penetrating and controlling insurgent groups (in particular those with external sources of support and supply); controlling the movements of population groups within the country and across national borders: and, foretelling external conditions and trends which could impact Ethiopia's national security.

These functions were distributed among the Public Security Organization's operational departments. The first and most known of these was the Office for Internal Security (*Hezb Dehninet* in Amharic), which was, as its designation implied, the organ solely responsible for internal security. Relying on "an elaborate network of full-time agents and paid informants including prostitutes and house guards" (Fontrier, 1999:33), it managed to be well-informed and effective in monitoring all facets of political and social life: teachers, journalists, literary figures, academicians, and officials of labor unions, peasant organizations were subjected to intense surveillance throughout the country. It was complemented by the Central Investigation Organ (*Maekelawi Mermera Dirijit*), a special section which operated its own prisons where it detained suspects (whose activities and views were deemed out of line) indefinitely, using torture methods and carrying out executions (AI, 1989:10).

Another notable and critical department was the Military Security Main Department (an excellent elaboration of this organ, which is discussed in this study's Chapter Four, is provided

by Tekeste, 1993), which had under surveillance the whole Ethiopian officer corps. The Foreign Intelligence Department was concerned with the observation of foreign states, the containment of the activities of foreign intelligence services, the surveillance and penetration of foreign diplomatic missions, and the accomplishment of all liaison activities with friendly foreign intelligence services. The department was also active abroad, especially in monitoring the activities of all opposition groups and engaging in disinformation operations by using its agents attached to Ethiopian embassies (Pateman, 1995:60).

2.3. Ethiopia's Post-1974 National Security Policy

The purpose of this section is to present a synopsis of Ethiopia's national security policy. Included in this synopsis are a discussion of Ethiopia's national security goals and the post-1974 regime's perception of threats to these goals, and a shorter presentation of the paramount strategy which it adopted to contain those threats.

2.3.1. Ethiopia's National Security Goals and Threat Perceptions

Despite the fact that its ideological underpinnings were radically different from those of its imperial predecessors, the post-revolution regime's fundamental national security goals showed conspicuous continuity with long-established concerns. The first and most critical of these fundamental goals was Ethiopia's survival consisting mainly of its political independence, which in turn amounted to the state's capacity to make decisions concerning its internal affairs and external policies. Indeed, "the survival of the geographic entity has been an overriding

consideration for governments headed by Menelik, Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam" (Marcus, 1987:129). A second fundamental goal was the maintenance of the fragile fabric of national unity combined with the preservation of territorial integrity. Mengistu incessantly talked about "according the highest priority and utmost attention to our unity, freedom, territorial integrity and national dignity" (1987:108), and of the imperialist and Arab reactionary design to dismember Ethiopia and deprive it from an outlet to the Red Sea. It is axiomatic that "Menelik might not understand Mengistu's rhetoric, but would appreciate the goal" (Marcus, 1987:129).

These fundamental goals were supplemented by other immediate and concrete goals which the regime set out to realize. Among these goals there were political goals, which included the enhancement of Ethiopia's stature regionally and globally; economic goals, which included achieving a sustained economic growth in all sectors (such as agriculture, industry, resource development) as well as economic subversion and smuggling; and, ideological goals, which included the ideological victory of "proletarian internationalism" over the US-led global imperialism.

The post-revolution regime identified four principal threats, which fell within the conventional framework of political and military threats outlined in Chapter One, to the above-cited Ethiopia's national security goals. The most dangerous, and explicitly military, threat was perceived to emanate from Somalia the hostile intentions of which were expressed through official statements, diplomatic initiatives and support for the Western Somali Liberation Front. These intentions were backed by a significant increase in military capabilities buttressed by the post-1963 Soviet military assistance which increased after 1974 (Crozier, 1975:4 and 8), and

culminated in the 1977 Somali invasion. The military threat was certainly curtailed by the Ethiopian repulsion of the invasion (the particulars of which are specified in Chapter Five), and diminished as a result of unrest within Somalia, but it did not disappear completely because the Somalis still possessed unsettling military capabilities (replenishing their military arsenal with Chinese, Saudi and Egyptian aid, according to Ethiopian military intelligence; see again Chapter Five), were determined to continue supporting the WSLF, and were unwilling to renounce their claims to the Ogaden. Indeed, the focal point of the Somali threat was the recovery of this southeastern province of Ethiopia, which is largely populated by Somalis and forms a wedge deep into Somalia.

The Ogaden was to be retrieved along with the Northern District of Kenya and the French-held Somali territory or present-day Djibouti. Djibouti's port was an important component of the Ethiopian trade structure, linked to Addis Ababa by a railway line (carrying more than 60% of Ethiopian trade) which Ethiopia would have relinquished if Somalia was to effectively reclaim both the French territory and the Ogaden. The five-pointed star in the national flag of Somalia attested to this idea of a "Greater Somalia," which served to "supersede the internal divisions between the formerly Italian and British parts" (Halliday et al, 1981:201), and as a unifying purpose for "the consolidation of the various family-clans into one Somali nation" (Mesfin, 1964:56). Somalia also wanted to control the Ogaden grazing lands, the oil and gas deposits reported to be in exploitable quantities in the area, the middle courses of the Wabi Shebelle and Ghenale rivers as well as to gain a more "manageable shape, making transportation and communication easier and economic" (ibid:58).

Ethiopian policy-makers also felt that Ethiopia faced another significant threat, partly military and partly political, from Sudan. In fact, post-1974 relations between the two states were marred by mutual suspicion and rivalry (Korn, 1986:81), going particularly sour in 1976 when they "threatened to break into open war" (Legum et al, 1979:55). From an Ethiopian standpoint, the Sudanese threat took precise form after the 1976 military alliance between Sudan and Egypt (a new ally of the US), which had evident anti-Ethiopian overtones. At the same time, the Ethiopian policy-makers were also worried about Sudan's support for Ethiopian insurgent groups as well as its troop concentrations along the 1,700-kilometer long border between the two states. In April 1977, Mengistu himself voiced this anxiety by stating that "over and above supporting and arming…[Ethiopian] anti-people organizations, [Nimeiri] is now deploying Sudanese army supported by artillery and tanks" (MoI, 1977:6). Despite occasional but half-hearted improvements, the gap between Ethiopia and Sudan never stopped widening, especially with incidents such as the latter's connivance with the Israeli-US "operation Moses," which was undertaken in 1984 to extract secretly from the former the Falashas or Ethiopian Jews (Ostrovsky, 1990:289).

Nonetheless, the Sudanese threat stemmed almost exclusively from the Ethiopian perception that the successive Sudanese regimes (from Nimeiri's regime through el-Mahdi's post-1986 regime to Beshir's post-1989 regime) provided tangible support to the major insurgent groups within Ethiopia, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. This support took the form of granting supply routes and weapons' transshipments across Sudan from Port Sudan as well as allowing the groups to operate freely in eastern Sudan's huge refugee camps, which had flourished after the post-1977 intensification of Ethiopia's northern war

(Woodward, 1996:123-124). Furthermore, Sudanese regimes promoted Islamic ideas and practices despite the existence of a substantial Christian and Animist population in the country. This trend, which got accentuated after 1989, fueled an inconclusive war in the country's southern part leading Khartoum's regimes to expand the Sudanese military forces to a significant degree, and employing them over an extended period of time. The regimes which surfaced in Sudan also tended to side persistently with Egypt against Ethiopia on the issue of the Nile River.

Egypt depends totally on the Nile River's waters for its existence, and, thus, "the first consideration of any Egyptian government is to guarantee that these waters are not threatened. This means ensuring that no hostile power can control the headwaters of the Nile or interfere with its flow into Egypt" (Heikal, 1978:715). Accordingly, Egypt repeatedly made it crystal-clear that it would resort to military action to preserve its portion of the Nile (the 1959 Egyptian-Sudanese Agreement allocated 55.5 billion cubic meters of the river to Egypt). For instance, after signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Egypt's late president Sadat issued a stern warning (well-noted in Addis Ababa) according to which "the only matter which could take Egypt to war again is water."

This policy aimed at preventing upstream states, especially Ethiopia which contributes more than 80% of the Nile's water, from claiming their share of the river's total water. Furthermore, being the Arab World's most populous, politically influential and militarily strongest state, Egypt entertained the larger and long-established ambition of projecting its power into the Red Sea and turning it into an "Arab Lake" (Halliday, 1982:98; Abir, 1974:134). Ethiopia was exposed to this power projection, which included support to Eritrean insurgent groups, military logistical support

to Somalia during the Ogaden War, and more engaged support to Sudan as previously mentioned.

The post-1974 regime recognized as the fourth principal threat, which presumably was likely to cause serous damage to Ethiopia's national security, the threat represented by the US' squeeze policy. The US basically wanted to contain the Soviet-Cuban threat in the strategically important Red Sea region, and did not wish Ethiopia's power to grow beyond a certain level and thereby weaken three of its staunchest allies in Africa which had long common borders with Ethiopia, namely Sudan, Kenya and Somali (Korn, 1986:56). Already in 1977, the Central Intelligence Agency had prepared a paramilitary unit code-named TORCH to assassinate Mengistu in order to destabilize his regime to the extent that it changed its nature and radical commitments (Dawit, 1989:35-36). Yet, given the CIA's inability to control the variables and uncertainties which might have arisen, it is doubtful the agency would have set out to do it. Thus, the TORCH plan might simply have been a KGB disinformation operation (Bittman, 1981) though it provoked the expulsion of two US diplomats (Pateman, 1995:54).

The Reagan doctrine, which called for vigorous support to insurgent groups against Soviet-supported Third World radical regimes with "covert action as the most viable and prudent modus operandi" (Johnson, 1991:243), put the Ethiopian post-1974 regime in its line of fire. In fact, Reagan "personally issued instructions on starting covert operations against the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam" (NPA, 1988:47). Accordingly, the CIA mounted a series of covert operations, which obviously cost it little in the way of financial and human resources as well as

in the way of direct risk. Despite the sparse and fragmentary information on them, two kinds of operations were undertaken.

In the first place, the CIA channeled US $ 500,000 (annually, up to 1990) to the London-based Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance. The EPDA was a conservative dissident group which had no military presence within Ethiopia, and organized flunked propaganda campaigns against the Mengistu regime (ibid; Pateman, 1995:54). In addition, it recruited well-placed civilian government employees and military assignees, who were handled by its officers operating in Ethiopia under the traditional diplomatic cover (For an overview of the CIA's staff working on Ethiopia in the late 1970s, see Appendix 6). This recruitment indulgence was undertaken to penetrate deep into the post-1974 regime for the purpose of gaining insights on its inner workings, on the motivations and intentions of its leaders, and on the pressures exerted on it by the Soviets. In this recruitment mission, the CIA was particularly successful as it managed to recruit "a senior Ethiopian official, a secret CIA source of such sensitivity that his reports went only to the BIGOT list [which denotes Top Secret reports exclusively given to the most senior US officials]. The Directorate of Operations evaluated him as generally reliable to excellent" (Woodward, 1987:167).

2.3.2. The National Security Strategy

It is self-evident that the post-revolution regime's national security conceptions stemmed from the need to counter the grave threats enumerated above. But, they were also firmly rooted in the historical experiences of the Ethiopian state (with numerous civil wars and foreign invasions; see

next chapter). These preoccupations and experiences gave birth to patterns of thought and of reacting to all external challenges which equated national security with military over-insurance. Thus, the regime devoted large amounts of scarce government expenditure (Appendix 9) and energy to recruit, train and arm an enormous military force, and to maintain access to dependable sources of weapons as well as its strategic relationship with the Soviet Union, which provided until 1990 around US $ 13 billion in military assistance (DoA, 1991). This policy was aimed at creating a marked numerical imbalance and weaponry discrepancy in favor of Ethiopia vis-à-vis its neighboring states.

The regime was convinced that, only in this fashion, could it be able to exert direct or indirect military pressure on, and to effectively constrain the military options and modify the politically challenging postures of these states as well as those of their superpower patron, the US. One representation of this policy was the sheer display of Ethiopia's military power during the regular celebrations marking the anniversary of the Ethiopian Revolution every September 12, which the regime wanted all of its actual and potential opponents to take note of. Indeed, the high point of these grandiose celebrations was always the military parade in which about 10,000 men and women representing the different services of the Armed Forces marched past Mengistu, their Commander in Chief. Along with the demonstration of personnel strength (10,000 exceeded the total armed forces of many African states!), the parade included a display of samples of sophisticated weapons (tanks, APCs, rocket launchers, an array of artillery weapons and surface-to-surface missiles); there was also an impressive fly-past of combat aircraft.

Chapter 3: Background and Command of the Post-1974 Armed Forces

3.1. Historical Background

In order to better understand the early and modern origins of Ethiopia's Armed Forces of 1974-1991, it is necessary to trace and examine the country's military tradition reflecting largely its history as well as the gestation and evolvement of its precursor modern military force.

3.1.1. The Ethiopian Military Tradition

Warfare occupies a unique and prominent place in Ethiopian history. Among the profusion of wars with which historical records are replete, three types can be determined. In some cases, however, the overlap is so pronounced that it is only through generalizing to a very high degree that common features of a certain type of war can be ascertained. The first type of war is the war of expansion. A textbook illustration is presented by the Aksumite kingdom, which conducted numerous and multidirectional military campaigns against subject peoples, even crossing the Red Sea to conquer Arabian territories. In the course of the subsequent centuries, owing to the introduction of Christianity and the spread of Islam as well as the political center's movement to the interior highlands, intermittent wars of expansion and proselytization occurred.

Hence, between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, Christian emperors launched a series of military campaigns against the Muslim Sultanates on the southeastern escarpment. This wave of

expansion reached its climax in the first half of the fourteenth century when Amda Siyon brought vast and diverse Christian, Muslim and Pagan areas of northeast Africa under his control. As Taddesse contested

> Like many other institutions of his empire, the organization of Amda Siyon's army was a direct replica of that of the kingdom of Aksum at the time of its greatest splendor…An essential common feature was the regional (or tribal) character of the military organization in both cases. It seems clear that the Christian army under Amda Siyon had two basic elements. First, there was an effective striking force closely attached to the royal Court, and this we may call the central army of the king. Secondly, in times of national or local crises, the monarch raised a huge local militia from the Christian provinces. These kept their local character…[and] were again subdivided into smaller units each commanded by its own local chieftain. A substantial part of the Christian army during major expeditions consisted of these local units, but the control of the monarch was often minimal (1972:89-90).

Nonetheless, the Christian forces encountered their greatest challenge with Ahmed Gragn's wars of revolt (1527-1547), which were only put down with the help of the Portuguese. During the next centuries, Ethiopian armies were primarily absorbed by their efforts to contain the military pressure of Oromo pastoral tribes, which penetrated the Christian empire from the south through continuous battles. The expansion saga was completed in late nineteenth century when Menelik brought under one central rule all the regions which constitute present-day Ethiopia's southern, western and eastern parts. Most of the peoples subjugated at different periods of time were more or less assimilated into the dominant society (in other words the society prevailing at the time), but the fact remains that virtually all the wars of expansion were reprehensibly ruthless, and that the administration which followed was generally oppressive and exploitative.

The second type of war is the war of defense waged against recurrent foreign invasions. In the sixteenth century, the Turks made repeated and unsuccessful attempts to conquer the northern parts of Ethiopia. Between 1820 and 1876, Egyptian invading forces carried out a series of military raids into Ethiopia from various directions; in the north, they were comprehensively defeated by Ethiopian armies at the battles of Gundet and Gura in 1875 and 1876 respectively. There was also the attempt to resist the British expedition commanded by General Napier (1867-1868). Moreover, warfare against the Italians began in 1887 at Dogali, and culminated in the decisive battle of Adwa (1896).

Finally, Ethiopian history is characterized by bitter and "chronic internecine warfare" (Levine, 1968:6). This third type of war, typified by the fierce antagonism between the Zamana Masafint's warlords (1769-1855), varies greatly in driving force, frequency, degree of intensity and endurance (the response of the established authority, emperor or lord, varies also depending on the foresight and strength of the holder of that authority). Among the conspicuous causes for these wars were warlike propensities displayed by individual political aspirants (succession to the throne, rivalry and resentment) coupled with the prospective gains from capturing the established authority and its resource base, and spontaneous popular uprisings in reaction to oppression and exploitation.

The prominence of warfare in Ethiopia's political and military history was matched by the organic link between military values and responsibilities, and the social, political and economic organization of the Ethiopian society. The structure of the society as a whole reflected more or less faithfully the structure of the military system, to the extent that the social place and

advancement of a given individual (whether at the top or at the bottom of the social ladder) depended largely on the weight of his service (title of rank) and ability in the army (Caulk, 1978). Emperors and lords typically awarded land, or other economic reward, and political appointments to those individuals who demonstrated their loyalty or reliability, bravery, high competence and tenacity in the battlefield. In a society into which (a culture of) military ethos, symbols and themes are inculcated pervasively and permanently, *wetaderenet* or soldering was an inescapable calling for any individual interested in social improvement in the hierarchy of power and wealth (Levine, 1968:8).

For centuries, the political capital of Ethiopia took the form of a mobile army camp. It was composed of a multitude of tents at the center of which the emperor's tent was put in place, ordinarily pitched on an elevated position. It was also arranged in a combat-ready formation, with the emperor's tent surrounded by the tents of lords or officers of standard ranks and their followers. The highest rank was *Ras* (head), who is in charge of the center of the battle formation. Then there is the *Azmatch* (simply commander). The *Kenyazmatch* (or commander of the right wing) and the *Grazmatch* (or commander of the left wing) and their military quarters installed to the right and the left, respectively. The advance guard commanded by the *Fitawrari* was habitually posted in front of the camp, indicating the direction of the army's projected march (Pankhurst, 1963:134-136). The camp would remain in one locality for a certain time, usually until the local supply of firewood and foods was exhausted, and move to another place for purposes of political control as well as for military considerations.

"In such a setting, policies were forged, decrees promulgated, political intrigues hatched, and juridical verdicts pronounced" (Levine, 1968:7), and taxes collected. Indeed, in the course of time and by way of roving capitals, the commander in chief of the military, the head of state, the chief executive and the chief justice (in the modern terminology) became one and the same person in the Ethiopian military and political tradition, that is the emperor. This tradition encouraged the development of a personality cult around the emperor, and at the same time curtailed the growth of urbanization and the related development of permanent political and judicial institutions the prerogatives of which were essentially assumed by emperors who were not always able and judicious administrators, and to which peoples could orient themselves.

Thus, insurrections were the only means available to the peoples (not only in the conquered areas but also in the regions from which the emperors themselves originated) to express their discontent. These insurrections were mostly provoked by the excessive demands imposed by soldiers looking for provisions on local peasants or the violation of peoples' traditional laws and practices, and were usually quelled through military means rather than the provision of a kind of autonomy, the reduction of taxes, the reinstitution of traditional practices and the punishment of soldiers guilty of plunder.

In bringing this survey of the Ethiopian military tradition to a close, attention must be drawn to a couple of facts. First of all, the individual Ethiopian soldier, who was the traditional army's basic fighting unit, was a self-educated peasant-warrior and not a true professional regularly and properly supplied standardized equipment (both offensive and defensive), quarters, health services, means of transportation, rations or money wages. In addition, his legendary potency

was not due to the strict discipline or the training imparted to him by the army, but to "the extent to which Ethiopian society as a whole was pervaded by military skills, virtues, and ambitions" (Levine, 1968:7), and to a cult of masculinity which glorified military valor, defiance and fearlessness (and dreaded going for cover during combat).

Secondly, viewed as a collectivity, the traditional Ethiopian army was an essentially peasant army of loosely knit units evading centralized command and with an uncontrollable urge for plunder. It was not an efficient and stable institution solely devoted to the art of warfare, distinguishable from the rest of the society. Its troops used rudimentary tactics and "moved to battle in a disorderly manner…[and] were not accustomed to persevering in battle" (ibid:9). Success or failure often depended on the leader's fortune; upon his death or capture, whole armies too frequently retreated in disorder and regrouped only with great difficulty. Furthermore, constant transfers of allegiance, desertions en masse and quarrels among military leaders habitually occurred.

3.1.2. Modernization of the Ethiopian Military System

The modernization of Ethiopia's military system was augured by the reforms which Emperor Tewodros (1855-1868) undertook. Tewodros envisaged the creation of a regular army which transcended local loyalties in favor of a single national loyalty, for instance soldiers coming from different regions forming one regiment (somewhat with a view to weaken regional warlords). He also sought to establish a new hierarchy of command, "appointing officers of different grades" (Rubenson, 1966:54) or ranks which are still used today. He tried to fix salaries to soldiers in

order to put a halt to the constant plundering of peasants. He is also credited with the introduction of discipline and mass training, the reduction of "the traditional retinue of the army, which had retarded its mobility and at the same time presented logistical problems" (Bahru, 1991:33). Finally, Tewodros "succeeded in building the first significant arsenal of artillery in Ethiopian history" (Pankhurst, 1990:131).

A combination of factors (among which continuous civil war ranked high), prevented Tewodros from successfully accomplishing his reforms. Yet, his ideas significantly influenced his two immediate successors. The first of them, Emperor Yohannes (1872-1889), obtained the services of a British named Kirkham, to train a number of his soldiers; acquired 20,000 Remington rifles after his forces defeated the Egyptian invading forces at Gura in 1876 (Levine, 1968:10); sought to mobilize his forces only in cases of national emergencies. The second one, Emperor Menelik (1889-1913), imported large quantities of firearms, ammunition and artillery, and "employed French officers to train some of his personal troops" (ibid). Nevertheless, both Yohannes and Menelik were unable to make any great advance in the organizational, disciplinary and training aspects. In fact, modernization in the real sense of the word was undertaken only during the regency and reign of Emperor Haile Selassie.

In 1917, Haile Selassie (or Tafari Makonen at the time) created the Imperial Bodyguard as a nucleus of a regular standing force. He recruited Ethiopian veterans of the King's African Rifles (who participated in the British campaign in German East-Africa), and arranged for a Belgian military mission to train in modern methods of warfare (1929-1935) the elite unit, which was mainly quartered in Harar (Pankhurst, 1963:122). In the 1920s, he sent a number of Ethiopian

officers to the French St.Cyr Military academy, and, in the face of an imminent threat posed by an Italian invasion, established a Military Training School at Holeta Genet (44 kilometers west of Addis Ababa) with Swedish assistance in 1935 (ibid:122-123). Furthermore, after 1924, Haile Selassie purchased several aircraft, including Potez 25 bombers and other light aircraft. Yet, at the outset of the 1935 Italian attack, the Holeta Military School was unable to graduate its first class, there were only 5,000 soldiers in the Imperial Bodyguard (organized in one regiment, it was supplied with uniforms and better weapons), and Ethiopia's air defense "consisted of 24 anti-aircraft cannon and 12 inefficient airplanes" (Spaatz, 1959:363).

The Italian invasion and interlude temporarily halted the growth of Haile Selassie's infant modern military force. But, it ultimately underscored the necessity for the modernization of Ethiopia's military system, which was, it can be argued with certitude, the result of three main concerns. The initial focus was on internal security, first as a power base for the returning monarch. A concurrent aim was to guard against rebellion by ethnic minorities, disgruntled lords or political rivals of the monarch at the same time ensuring the national stability required to avoid foreign interference. The third concern was the need to fend off possible external military threats to the state's independence together with ensuring the security of Ethiopian borders against foreign encroachment (Bahru, 1991:207-208). The post-war modernization consisted of the following noteworthy measures:

1. the Imperial Bodyguard was revived and received training "under the command of Ethiopian officers who had attended the Holeta Academy before the war and matured during the campaign of liberation" (Levine, 1968:12). The Holeta Military School was also reopened

after 1941 with a staff of British instructors (until 1951). In addition, the Haile Selassie I Military Academy was opened in 1957 in Harar (525 kilometers east of Addis Ababa), and was managed and staffed by Indian army officers until 1971. This higher learning institution provided a three-year course for cadets aged 18-21 in military science as well as academic subjects. Military instruction included fieldcraft, tactics, engineering, intelligence, security and administration (Mamo, 1990:36-40). The entry requirements of both the Holeta School and Harar Academy were high, the former accepting applicants who completed 12th grade and the latter giving preference to applicants who have completed one or two years at University. The training programs had three educational goals: "the development of a loyalty to the nation that transcends loyalty to particular ethnic groups; the substitution of an ethic of professional competence for the old-fashioned military ethic of naïve martial enthusiasm and wanton bravery; and the substitution of an ethic of professional duty for the age-old ethic of political ambition through military service" (Levine, 1968:15).

2. the Territorial Army was created in 1959. It was meant to provide auxiliary forces in time of war, and to assist in the maintenance of internal security in time of peace. It was "trained in twelve training centers of which six were in the Shewan region encircling the capital" (Tekeste, n.d.:11).

3. the traditional method of raising armies by regional levies was abandoned. The traditional military hierarchy and ranks were abrogated. Responsibility for all military affairs was fully concentrated in a Ministry of War (reorganized and renamed Ministry of Defense in 1955). And, the Ethiopian government expended a large amount of its annual budget for military affairs. "In 1944-1945 for instance, out of a total of some $ Eth. 38 million…about $ Eth. 8

was allocated for war. In 1967, the figures were over $ Eth. 80 million…out of a total of about $ Eth.400 million" (Bahru, 1991:208).

4. the Ethiopian government signed a military assistance agreement with the US, which initially undertook "to train and equip three six-thousand-man divisions at a total cost of about five million dollars, a generosity then and subsequently considered a form of rent" (Marcus, 1995:89-90) for the American use of the Kagnew communications base in Eritrea, which claimed at the time "the largest high-frequency radio-relay station and listening post in the world" (Smith, 1974:159). The US was Ethiopia's primary supplier of military hardware and training, and provided a model for the Ethiopian army's doctrine and structure. Ethiopia ranked first as a US military aid recipient, getting at least 60% of all US military funds for Africa. It had received between the early 1950s and 1970 around US $ 147 million (Markakis, 1974:257). Also, in the same period, around 2,800 Ethiopian officers were sent to the US for various courses.

5. the Imperial Ethiopian Air Force was organized with the assistance of Swedish personnel, forming its first combat units in 1948. The Air Force Training School was established at Debre Zeit (60 kilometers south of Addis Ababa) in 1945. After 1963-1964, the US began providing training and equipment, the Air Force becoming "the most prestigious show-piece of American military aid" (Bahru, 1991:186).

6. after the federation of Eritrea into Ethiopia in 1952 (and the ensuing 500 nautical miles coastline on the Red Sea to guard and defend), the Imperial Ethiopian Navy was formed with the assistance of Norwegian naval officers, following the establishment of the Imperial Naval College at Massawa in 1955 (EAF, 1963:36). The College consisted of three branches, the "Executive Branch where cadets are trained to become deck officers responsible for the

navigation and seamanship; the Administrative Branch where the cadets are taught the arts of supply and procurement; and lastly, the Engineering Branch which entails the training of engineering officers in the manipulation of engineering and electrical equipment" (ibid).

3.1.3. An Assessment of the Imperial Armed Forces

It is safe to remark that Haile Selassie's modernization program, which was geared towards converting Ethiopia's military system from a makeshift, loose and static military force to a national, professional and multi-service force (firmly under imperial control and distinct from society), had succeeded. In fact, the emperor had built a military force, which saw action inside and outside the African continent; whose command structure was firmly controlled by the emperor; which was the largest and best equipped force in Sub-Saharan Africa in the mid-1960s; and whose social and ethnic composition was diversified.

(1) The Armed Forces in Action:

The Armed Forces were handed over three occasions to shine, and thus earn esteem and respectability from the Ethiopian society. First, one infantry battalion (the Kagnew Battalion, altogether 5,000 men) was deployed in Korea under United Nations flag after 1950. During their two-year stay, these troops performed with distinction. Then, over 3,000 troops organized in four fully equipped infantry battalions and half an air transport squadron were sent to the Congo to participate in United Nations military actions. Some Ethiopian generals even took command of the entire peacekeeping force. Finally, skirmishes in the vicinity of the Ethio-Somali border in

1964 impelled vigorous and much-lauded Ethiopian military attacks (Levine, 1968:13). Nevertheless, the fight with a die-hard and secessionist insurgency in Eritrea somewhat tarnished the Armed Forces' reputation.

(2) The High Command, Imperial Control and Force Structure:

Haile Selassie was the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Though theoretically advised by an obscure National Defense Council, the emperor intervened definitively in all defense-related decisions, the commander of the Imperial Bodyguard and the Minister of Defense directly reporting to him. The Minister of Defense was supposed to assist the emperor in all military matters, and more importantly to exercise authority, direction and control over all components of the Armed Forces. He was responsible for the formulation of "policies and, with respect to the Armed Forces, for the general direction, supervision and coordination of the Ground, Air and Naval Forces as well as the Department of Marine" (EAF, 1963:8), and oversaw the Chief of Staff.

The office of the Chief of Staff, which was established in 1955, was the "principal coordinating body of the Ground, Air and Naval Forces including the coast guard and all facilities within, and/ or, utilized by the respective components of the Armed Forces" (ibid:10). He was "in charge, under the supervision of the Minister of Defense, of planning, operations, development, execution review and analysis of the Armed Forces program" (ibid:10). The commanders of the Ground Force, Air Force and Navy came under the command of the Chief of Staff, but the lines

of command were not always respected since "in practice all these officers also report directly to the emperor" (Levine, 1968:14).

Understandably, Haile Selassie selected senior officers for assignments to critical command posts on the basis of loyalty and personal preference rather than on the basis of either strict seniority (age or service) or merit. For instance, "all loyalist officers who defended Haile Selassie's throne in 1960 were given promotions, and the senior commanders succeeded each other in the top posts of the military hierarchy " (Markakis, 1974:255). Assignments to key posts usually entailed "opportunities for professional improvement through tours of study abroad; retention on active duty, which ensures eventual arrival at the top of the hierarchy; appointment to general staff positions when once one arrives at the top; and periodic gifts from the Emperor personally" (ibid). The monarch even used marriage as a device to cement the loyalty of the senior commanders, three notable examples provided by Lieutenant General Abiye Abebe, who was Minister of War in the 1950s, Lieutenant General Merid Mangasha, who was Chief of Staff in the 1950s and Minister of Defense in the 1960s (Marcus, 1995:128 and 164), and Major General Nega Tegegn, who was commander of the Third Division.

In 1972, the Imperial Armed Forces fielded about 44,570 men. The Ground Force, consisting of 40,940 men, had four 8,000-man divisions: the Second Division with its HQ in Asmera, the Third Division with its HQ in Harar, the Fourth Division with its HQ in Addis Ababa which was also the HQ for the Imperial Bodyguard (in effect the best-equipped and best-trained as well as over-privileged unit, radically purged after the 1960 unsuccessful coup d' état it mounted). These divisions in turn consisted of 23 infantry battalions, 4 artillery battalions, 1 tank battalion, 1

airborne battalion, 1 armored car squadron, 5 air defense batteries, and 2 engineer battalions. The Army's equipment was almost wholly American, including 30 M-41 medium tanks, 20 M-21 light tanks, and about 40 armored personnel carriers. With its HQ in Debre Zeit, the Air Force numbered some 2,250 men, and included 1 bomber squadron with 4 Cambera B-2, 1 fighter-bomber squadron with 12 F-86F, 1 ground-attack squadron with 6 T-28A, 1 ground-attack squadron with 9 Saab-17, 1 fighter squadron with 15 F-5A, 1 transport squadron with C-47s and DC-3s, 3 training squadrons with 20 Saab 91-D, 11 T-33 and 15 T-28A, and 15 helicopters. The Navy, with its HQ in Addis Ababa, had about 1,380 men. It possessed 1 coastal minesweeper, 1 training ship (a former seaplane tender outfitted to also serve as a flagship), 5 patrol boats, 2 motor torpedo boats and 4 landing craft (IISS, 1972:37-38).

(3) Socio-Ethnic Composition:

Information on whether the pre-1974 Armed Forces recruited from a narrow ethnic and relatively high-status base or from a broader more ethnically representative and lower-status base is inadequate and unreliable. Nevertheless, some authors ventured certain conjectures. Markakis argued that the ethnic and social composition of the top command structure seemed somewhat diversified. Among the officers who held a general's commission in the 1960s, "the Amhara naturally constitute the largest number. Yet, there are many [Oromo], Tigre-Eritreans, and even four Gurage in this group…The social composition of the senior officer group is difficult to categorize. Noble background is attributed to a minority of the Amhara officers, while *balabat* origin is attributed to some of the Oromo" (1974:255).

Halliday and Molyneux agreed that the senior officers came mainly from the Amhara, and suggested that middle and junior officers were drawn from Tigreans, Eritreans, and Oromo, who in fact, "made up 21% of officers of the rank of lieutenant-colonel and above, 30% of those below. And 40% of the ordinary soldiers, with Amhara representing 65% of the top officers and 40% of the ordinary soldiers" (1981:72). Levine, on his part, contended that the enlisted men consisted

> primarily of Amhara, with some Tigreans and a heavy admixture of [Oromo]. At the commissioned level, the proportion of Tigreans is higher and that of [Oromo] lower. A survey of the cadets in the Harar Military Academy in 1959-1960 revealed the following ethnic distribution: Amhara, 53%; Tigrean, 26%; Aderi and [Oromo], 8%; no reply, 13%. With respect to the socio-economic class of their families, the same cadets respond as follows: upper class, 11%; middle class, 53%; poor or lower class, 21%; peasant class, 3%; no reply, 13% (1968:15).

3.2. The Post-1974 Armed Forces' High Command: Organization and Defects

This section gives a broad outline of how the organizational arrangements of the Armed Forces' High Command were centralized in the 1974-1991 period in order to ensure that Mengistu remained undisputedly at the top of the military chain of command, and, also, how the Ministry of Defense fitted in this tendency.

3.2.1. Centralization of the High Command

The emergence of the personal power of Mengistu, who had become chairman of the PMAC, chairman of the Council of Ministers, Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed

Forces in February 1977, largely determined the manner in which responsibilities[5] were allocated within the High Command of the Armed Forces. In that year alone, in the space of six months, three special bodies were introduced. In July 1977, a Revolutionary Campaign Coordination Center headed by Mengistu was contrived in Addis Ababa (Legum et al, 1979:42). This body was, however, outworn by the establishment in August 1977 of the National Revolutionary Operations Command.

Created in response to the general unrest in the Armed Forces, to leftist groups' opposition of the new regime, and the deteriorating situation in Eritrea and the Ogaden (especially after the outbreak of hostilities with Somalia), the NROC initially undertook the recruiting, training and equipping of the People's Militia, before emerging as the central command structure and assuming sweeping "military and civil powers" (ION, 1985:61). It was headed by a 28-member Council the membership of which consisted of six PMAC members, five Cabinet ministers, five senior military commanders, five members of the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs, and representatives of trade unions and mass organizations. The Council, which was chaired again by Mengistu (with a naval officer, Lieutenant Commander Yehualashet Girma, serving as secretary), assumed command of the Armed Forces and "had the power to commandeer facilities and manpower for the war effort" (Legum et al, 1979:42).

In December 1977, the NROC was adjoined the Supreme Military Strategic Committee. This body was established to design strategy and direct military operations in Eritrea and the Ogaden,

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[5] Command responsibilities encompass "broad responsibilities to include operational responsibility for planning, organizing, training, directing, coordinating and controlling armed forces to accomplish missions, together with the administrative responsibility for supply for the health, welfare, morale, discipline, assignment and relief of personnel" (DoA, 1961:139).

and to elevate the Armed Forces' technical efficiency (ION, 1985:61). The SMSC included seven Ethiopian, eight Soviet and three Cuban members. In July 1980, the NROC and the SMSC were finally dissolved. In April 1983, the National Defense and Security Council was founded. The Council included the Head of State (Mengistu!), the secretary-general of the PMAC, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Public Safety and Security (these two ministries were separate at the time) and the Inspector General in the Ministry of Defense (Fontrier, 1999:52). At times, Soviet military advisors and sector commanders took part in the Council's deliberations. It was empowered to devise the country's military policies, and assigned to improve defense strategies and to coordinate the Armed Forces, the People's Militia and the civilian population in times of war. A general officer, Brigadier General Alemu Tibebu (an intelligence officer who was military attaché in Sudan), was posted to serve as the Council's Secretary (ibid:53).

Article 62 of the 1987 Constitution of the PDRE designated the National Shengo as "the supreme organ of state power." A list of specific powers followed, among which the power to determine both defense policy and a state of war (Article 63, Section 1). Under the National Shengo, the Council of State was established and charged with implementing the National Shengo's decisions; the post of President of the Council of State, occupied by Mengistu, was combined with that of President of the PDRE (Article 81, Section 3). By far the most important military clause of the Constitution was Article 85, which provided that the President of the PDRE was the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. His powers included the appointment of senior military ranks (Article 86, Section 3). The Council of State was empowered to establish a national-level Defense Council (Article 82, Section 2) presumably as the President's principal

advisory body for matters relating to the Armed Forces, although its responsibilities were not expounded upon specifically. The President "appointed members of the Defense Council and presided over its meetings" (Article 86, Section 3). According to the same article, he was also entitled to confer senior military ranks (PDRE, 1988:73-83).

As a final note, it should be pointed out that, in the final three years of the regime, a National Revolutionary Campaign Center was hastily established in the locale of the presidential Palace to alleviate the deteriorating politico-military situation (See Tekeste, n.d.). The NRCC was chaired as usual by Mengistu, and had for secretary Brigadier General Tesfaye Terfie, an officer with remarkable credentials (graduating with honors from both Harar Military Academy and the British Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst) and executed in 1990 for his involvement in the 1989 coup.

3.2.2. The Ministry of Defense

In the immediate years following the Revolution, owing to the increasing centralization of power and command responsibilities in the hands of Mengistu, to his hallmark tendency to "limit the operational autonomy of the Ministry of Defense" (ibid:45), and to the proliferation of bodies (listed in the foregoing discussion) superimposed on it, the Ministry of Defense was virtually restricted to deal with budgetary and administrative matters affecting the Armed Forces. In fact, "the new organizational structure of the Ministry of Defense became effective as of 11 September 1977. One of the major changes introduced was the merging together of what used to be known as the Headquarters of the Ministry of Defense and the Headquarters of the Armed

Forces and the justification was to shorten the chain of command and reduce bureaucratic problems" (ibid:20). Only after the Ogaden military victory, the drastic expansion in size of the Armed Forces, and the growth in strength of the insurgent groups, did it manage to progressively participate in day-to-day control and responsibility of command, albeit in a reserved manner, and "directly command operational structures" (Fontrier, 1999:54).

An important factor in this direction was the appointment in 1980 of a close associate of Mengistu to the post of Minister of Defense, Brigadier General Tesfaye Gebre Kidan (promoted to Lieutenant General in 1982). Lieutenant General Tesfaye was considered to be a military strategist in his own right (credited with the victory of Ethiopian forces over their Somali opponents), widely popular in the Armed Forces as well as close to the Soviets. He chaired in 1981 a top-level seminar to discuss national defense affairs[6] (ION, 1985:21-23), and in his capacity as Minister of Defense, participated in advising and planning defense strategies, and also directly participated in matters of operational command.

Lieutenant General Tesfaye was preceded in this post by Lieutenant General Aman Andom (the ill-fated first chairman of the PMAC), Ayalew Mandefro (1976-1977), and Brigadier General Taye Tilahun (1977-1980), the only official who had won Mengistu's respect because he refused to carry out orders which contradicted his principles (Dawit, 1989:137). Major General Haile-Giyorgis Habte-Mariam succeeded Lieutenant General Tesfaye in 1987; he was killed during the 1989 coup.

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[6] The seminar concluded that more responsibilities (long-range planning, analysis of both military and political situations, and administration of support services) ought to be delegated to the Ministry.

Thus, in the late 1980s, the Ministry of Defense had effected a transition from its earlier amorphous role to a relatively more standard military role as well as organization (Appendix 2). Accordingly, the Minister of Defense basically came to ensure almost freely the functioning of the entire Armed Forces, assisted in this task by two deputies. The first deputy was the Head of the Armed Forces' Political Commissariat (or Main Political Administration), a post combined with that of Deputy Minister of Defense in the late 1980s. The purpose of the Head of the Political Commissariat was to guide and control the body of political officers, which had penetrated the whole Armed Forces horizontally and vertically in order to guard against any hostile dispositions towards the regime (ION, 1985:66).

Political officers, whose chief function was political education and propaganda, were attached to every echelon, from the highest level (army, corps and divisional levels for the Ground Force) to the lowest (company, platoon and squad levels). Disliked by the professionally oriented officers, they used two main propaganda lines: the encouragement of heroism in battle by examples drawn from anterior war experiences (Tewodros and Alula being their fetishes), and the systematic indoctrination of hatred towards the enemy. All in all, since all military matters were perceived by the regime to constitute a political problem, the Head of the Political Commissariat was concerned with practically all aspects and activities of the Armed Forces, thus coming to play a vital role.

Correspondingly, the Head of the Political Commissariat, a position occupied by Major General Gebreyes Wolde Hanna (1980-1988) and then by Major General Mesfin Gebrekal (a former Chief of Operations and deputy commander of the Ground Force, trained in the Royal Military

Academy of Sandhurst), ranked higher than the second deputy (Fontrier, 1999:59-60). The second deputy was the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (a position filled by Major General Gizaw Belayneh before 1977, Major General Haile-Giyorgis Habte-Mariam from 1977 to 1987, Major General Merid Negussie from 1987 to 1989, and Lieutenant General Addis Tedla from 1989 to 1991), who basically ran the Ministry of Defense's departments (ibid:54). Among these departments of varying size and independence, the following three were the most important:

1. the Operations Department: it was an inter-service department, which handled the operation problems of the Armed Forces: strategic and tactical plans (as well as detailed operational plans) for the prosecution of war, identification of the military equipment required by the three services. It also supervised the work of the corresponding offices of the ground, air and naval forces as well as those of other subordinate levels.

2. the Administration and Logistics Department: it supervised all matters relating to administrative problems (including recruitment, finance, officers and NCOs administration, medical services, documentation and records, military justice and training) as well as logistics (supply of rations and fuel, maintenance and repairs).

3. the Military Intelligence Department (this department's organization, sphere of activities and staff will be examined with sufficient detail below).

3.2.3. Overview of the Military Intelligence Department

Placed under the direct supervision of the Chief of Staff, the Military Intelligence Department was an inter-service department, which had a broad range of responsibilities including: the control of all matters relating to the gathering, reporting and exploitation of intelligence about potential enemies' existing political, socio-economic and military situations as well as activities and intentions; the oversight of military intelligence education and training; the supervision of the planning, budget and work of corresponding offices at subordinate levels (services and warfighting commands); the management of the Ethiopian military attaché system, and the monitoring of foreign military attachés in Ethiopia; and, the production of an annual intelligence assessment for the Chief of Staff (MID, 1989:1). Located in the compound of the Ministry of Defense, the department had seven directorates: Combat Intelligence Directorate, Military Mapping Directorate, Covert Operations Directorate, Research and Analysis Directorate, Foreign Relations Directorate, Dissemination Directorate, and, Administration and Logistical Support Directorate (Appendix 3).

The department operated a small military intelligence school, which offered training in "basic and advanced intelligence, aerial photography and prisoner-of-war interrogation" (ibid:3). It also sent selected officers abroad, usually to the Soviet Union in GRU operated schools, for training in strategic intelligence and code analysis. Its staff was composed of career intelligence professionals with the necessary competence and experience. In the pre-1974 era, several of the brightest officers graduating from both Harar Military Academy and Holeta Military School were assigned to intelligence duties, and were sent to Israel for further training. Other officers

were sent overseas to serve as liaisons in Ethiopian embassies, under the military attaché system, and often to openly collect information. These two sets of professional officers were complemented by officers who had non-intelligence experience, which was gained during their postings with operational units, and officers having University degrees. Nevertheless, this staff's reputation was dented by its repeated mishaps in the northern war, which were partly caused by disenchantment over excessive political control as well as Soviet meddling.

Chapter 4: Anatomy of the Post-1974 Armed Forces

4.1. Military Leadership and Doctrine

4.1.1. Military Leadership

Despite attempts to improve its quality, the Ethiopian military leadership was constrained by the advancement system as well as by the command system both discussed below.

(1) Promotions and Appointments:

As anywhere on the African continent, decisions as to who would be assigned a command in the Ethiopian Armed Force were crucially influenced by Mengistu's self-protective tendencies. "Few African regimes, whatever their ideology, feel secure enough to encourage effective leaders within the military, whether or not the political incumbents themselves wear the uniform" (Barrows, 1985:103). Indeed, the fear of a coup d'état led many political leaders to take measures designed to shunt the brightest but potential troublemakers (thus depriving them of a power base); officers lacking in professional qualities were conferred better appointments and accelerated promotions simply because of their loyalty. Classical examples in the Ethiopian case were "Brigadier General Girma Ayele and Brigadier General Gebre-Giyorgis Birhane who were only corporal when the Ethiopian revolution broke out in 1974…their promotion [being] a reward for the services they rendered as political cadres within the army. None of them had been known for any excellence in the military arena" (Eyayu, 1994:671).

And, as a rule, after the suppression of a failed coup, competence took second place to loyalty. Eyayu posited that Mengistu, "after detaining and later on killing many distinguished senior officers [implicated in the 1989 abortive coup],…gave bumper promotions to his own sycophants who were completely detached from military life for nearly fifteen years, and appointed them to key positions in the Army. Accordingly, Addis Tedla was raised to the rank of Lieutenant General and appointed Chief of Staff after his stay in the civil sector since 1974 when he was only a major [an Air Force technician]" (ibid).

The manipulation of promotion was also a device to appoint to key assignments Holeta Military School graduates, especially those belonging to Mengistu's course, the 19th course: Lieutenant General Tesfaye Gebre Kidan, Minister of Defense; Major General Gebreyes Wolde Hanna, Head of the Political Commissariat; Brigadier General Gebre Kiristos Buli, Head of the Campaign Department; Brigadier General Abebe Gebre-Meskel, Head the Military Security Main Department; Brigadier General Getaneh Haile, Head of the National Military Service; and, Brigadier General Getatchew Shibeshi, Commander of the Special Force Brigade. "On the other hand, most of the graduates of the Harar Military Academy were marginalized from such key positions" (ibid:672).

Teferra remarked that appointments were apparently made "without consideration of the aspirations of career officers…was a reflection of desperation and the sense of insecurity of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces…[and damaged] the morale of the forces beyond any glimmer of hope for its restoration" (1997:298-299). Indeed, undeserved

> promotions and appointments had eventually castrated the fighting potential of the
> army. Many of them were unfit, lacking the required experience and knowledge for

the positions they assumed. They could not discharge their responsibilities efficiently. This consequently brought about a demoralizing effect on the brave and competent elements of the officer corps on the one hand, and gave way to suspicion, lack of confidence and contempt among the other members of the army, on the other (Eyayu, 1994:672).

Finally, within the framework of strengthening Mengistu's control, divide-and-rule personal policies were practiced – officers constantly being played off against one another. For instance, "the Minister of Defense [Major General Haile-Giyorgis] is seen by many…as incompetent and is at odds with several of the officers. The newly appointed Head of the Political Affairs for the Armed Forces [Major General Mesfin] is a sworn enemy of the Minister of Defense" (Dawit, 1989:64). Also, the component parts of the Special Force Brigade "were organized on the basis of *divide e empira* by which Colonel Mengistu played off one against the other…Commanders of the units had no right to make concerted efforts, did not like each other, received orders at different times and operated one after another" (Tekeste, n.d.:39).

(2) The Triangular Command:

Mengistu introduced the stringent triangular command (Appendix 1) into the Armed Forces "as a mechanism to secure the permanent loyalty of the Army by preventing and arresting coups d'état and mutinies" (Eyayu, 1994:673). This system, modeled closely on the Soviet Red Army, was in flagrant contradiction of the sacrosanct military principle of unity of command, which ensured that all military actions and orders must be nested in a common intent and carried out with singular goal. This command system involved three institutions whose elements had theoretically dissimilar and separate functions: the normal military chain of command under which the

military commander, who was supposedly in charge of all military affairs, operated; the Political Commissariat (mentioned previously) anchored to the WPE and under which the political officer or commissar, who was in charge of indoctrination, operated; and the Military Security Main Department under which the security officer, who was in charge of surveillance, operated (ibid:672-673; Tekeste, n.d.:46 and 51). It is essential to dwell on the latter element.

The Military Security Main Department, initially called Military Security Organization, was "established in 1980 with the advice of the KGB as an integral part of the Ministry of Public Safety and Security to serve…as a control mechanism over the Armed Forces" (ibid:49). With its HQ inside the Ministry of Public Safety and Security (later reorganized as the Ministry of Internal Affairs), this counter-intelligence department, which acted as a kind of a secret police within the Armed Forces, was headed for a long time by Brigadier General Abebe, who was answerable to the Minister of Public Safety and Security. It was basically bent on collecting information on the activities of the Armed Forces' personnel, thwarting the activities of foreign intelligence agencies, and uncovering turncoats as well as tracking deserters. It "stretched its networks along the organizational structure of the Ministry of Defense and the Commission of Defense Industry. It established its networks within the Ground Force, Air Force and Naval Force of the country. By 1989, its structure was extended up to the brigade level in the Ground Force" (ibid). It was planning to reach down to the lowest levels of the platoon and squad.

The introduction of the triangular command impeded effective military leadership and proper conduct. The military commander was continuously scrutinized by two officers who were theoretically his subordinates. They were kept informed of everything, facilitating the leakage of military secrets disseminated throughout three different channels, thus tripling the risk of being

intercepted or disrupted (Eyayu, 1994:675), and compromising military operations. And, most damagingly, they intervened in issues of purely military nature such as promotions and even the preparation and execution of military plans. Eyayu provided two accounts illustrating the manner and dire implication of interferences of the sort

> General Kebede Gashe told me that both the political and security officers that were assigned to the corps he was commanding were captains by rank. While many senior officers were marginalized, these two, by virtue of their political back-strength, shared equal authority with him over all the affairs of the army. Similarly, General Wubetu told me that he was supposed to share authority with two junior political and security officers who did not even have basic knowledge of map reading. The two generals had more than 35 years of experience in the army and attended advanced military training both at home and abroad. In contrast, the political and security officers had no more than five years of experience and were without any solid military training (ibid:673).

(3) The Armed Forces Command and Staff Academy:

From 1987 to 1989, the Armed Forces Command and Staff Academy was set up in Addis Ababa (Béla), headed first by Brigadier General Afework Wolde Mikael and then by Brigadier General Dessalegn Abebe (both killed during and after the 1989 coup, respectively). The institution was dedicated to the advanced education of selected senior officers from the three services of the Armed Forces, as a rule generals and colonels. It was assigned to develop the officers' capabilities to hold leadership positions in the Armed Forces. The duration of the academy's course was one year, and the officers studied operational planning and administration, military art, strategy, history, geography, and law as well as academic subjects such as economics, management and international relations; they also conducted research on national and

international defense issues (DoA, 1991). Soviet personnel initially staffed the academy's faculty, but were eventually replaced by Ethiopian instructors.

4.1.2. Military Doctrine

The Ethiopian doctrine was strictly modeled on the Soviet doctrine, because the Ethiopian officers assigned to elaborate it were either trained in the Soviet Union or were advised by Soviet officers instilling their own principles and concepts. Thus, it was built on general Soviet principles: in the event of war, a decisive victory can be scored on the enemy only with offensive tactics involving mass attacks and air superiority (as well as the rational use of intelligence); and, since a surprise outbreak of hostilities was the most dangerous form of beginning a war (the attacker has the initiative), it was decisive not to allow one's forces to be surprised, but to take the initiative from the very outset by means of surprise, or at least to regain it quickly (Bonds, 1980:152).

Accordingly, the Ethiopian doctrine called for the establishment of Armed Forces, which have to be brought up to maximum strength and kept constantly at high operational readiness (MoD, n.d.:28). It also fixed the primary mission of the Armed Forces to protect Ethiopia's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty, and stressed that the soldiers of all the uniformed services were obliged to dedicate all their energy – "sacrifice their lives" – for the accomplishment of this first-priority mission. As to the preparation of the Ethiopian economy, the doctrine restricted itself to generalities such as planning, road-building and mobilization of food resources. On the point of preparing the civilian population, however, it emphasized the importance of "raising the political-moral level of the entire nation" (ibid:30).

The Ethiopian doctrine was poorly applied, or not at all applied. Its first inherent flaw stemmed from the fact that it was only a replica of the Soviet doctrine, which was formulated on the basis of three ideologically determined types of modern war: war between the "imperialist camp" and the "socialist camp;" imperialist wars, which were unjust wars, since they were "wars of conquest inimical to the people;" and, national wars of liberation and revolutionary wars, which were the only just wars (ibid:31). The Soviet doctrine also dealt basically with the threat of a general nuclear war, or otherwise a massive conventional war in Europe (involving integrated battle forces which were presumed to combine heavy mechanized and armor formations), and was therefore not adapted to meet Ethiopian conditions.

Finally, owing to the introduction of the triangular command and its cohorts of political indoctrination and security control, the Armed Force was naturally faced with a tremendous handicap in respect to initiative. The fear of the political and security officers, who permeated all units, simply sapped initiative. Commanders rarely made decisions on their own and required the approval of these officers, and indirectly of higher-ranking authorities before they modified their operations, regardless of impending disaster (Gilkes, 1994:730). "It is even said that army commanders had to get Mengitu's consent before they could mobilize any of their units" (Eyayu, 1994:676).

4.2. Force Structure, Manpower and Equipment

The Armed Forces were divided, in standard military practice, into three services on the basis of functions: the Ground Force, the Air Force and the Navy. This survey of the Armed Forces' three

services commences with the Navy, which was the most disciplined but smallest service (lagging behind the two other services, in terms of assets and the roles it could perform), proceeds to the Air Force, which was the most technically advanced service, to finally arrive at the Ground Force, which was the largest and most important service.

4.2.1. The Navy

Formed more for prestige than interest in a naval force in the 1950s, the Ethiopian Navy was the least developed of the services, and, concerned only with protecting a sizeable coastline, had seen little combat (ION, 1985:65). Navy personnel strength totaled 3,000 in 1986; the sailors were reputed to be united by bonds of mutual esteem and discipline (such as are rarely found in the other two services). The Navy was built around two frigates (the frigate being the Navy's principal unit and major surface combatant) and light forces (especially fast attack craft armed with SS-N-2 *Styx* surface-to-surface missiles or torpedoes) mostly acquired in the late 1970s and mid 1980s from the Soviet Union, which also provided naval advisors and constructed a forward base on the Dahlak Island.

Roughly after 1986, the Navy was configured into two naval commands, the northern naval command and the southern naval command, while overall command of the small fleet was assumed by Rear Admiral Tesfaye Berhanu until he was imprisoned for his involvement in the 1989 coup. After 1989 and up to 1991, Yehualashet Girma (Lieutenant Commander in 1977) was called back from his civilian functions (he was First WPE Secretary for Addis Ababa), promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, and appointed commander of the Navy.

Table 1: Ethiopian Navy's Order of Battle

Frigates	2 *Zerai Deres* (Soviet *Petya* II class)
Light Forces	8 Soviet *Osa* II class missile craft
	4 Soviet *Mol* class torpedo craft
	2 Soviet *Turya* class fast attack craft
	2 Soviet *Zukh* class coastal patrol craft
	3 US *Swift* type large patrol craft
Amphibious Forces	2 Soviet *Polnochy* B class medium landing ship
	4 Soviet T-4 class landing craft
	2 French *Edic* class landing craft for vehicles and personnel
	Plus 3 other US-made landing craft

Sources: Data is drawn and adapted from IISS's *The Military Balance 1986-1987* (1986) and *The Military Balance 1989-1990* (1989) as well as Moore's *Jane's Fighting Ships 1986-1987* (1986).

This buildup, though modest in comparison to that of the ground and air forces, reflected the regime's recognition of the need to develop the Navy (ibid). The Navy's bases were at Massawa where the main operational center was located, and Asab, which was expanded to include a ship repair facility and a missile storage. The Naval College in Asmera ensured the training of naval officers. Students there pursued

> a fifty-month course of instruction, which led to a naval science degree and a commission in the Navy. The Naval College academic curriculum was broader than the Army and Air Force's programs, and was supplemented by training at sea. In 1984, some forty-eight ensigns, belonging to the twenty-fourth graduating class, received diplomas; subsequent classes were of comparable size. Some naval officers received training abroad, notably at the Naval Academy in Leghorn, Italy, and at the Leningrad Naval Academy in the Soviet Union. The Navy maintained a training center in Massawa for seamen, technicians and marines. Recruits enlisted for seven years (DoA, 1991).

Notwithstanding the fact that the Ethiopian Navy was the largest and most advanced navy compared to immediate neighboring states' navies (Sudan's, Kenya's, Somalia's and, understandably, Djibouti's), it had quite limited operational capabilities in comparison to the other Red Sea fleets (Egypt's or Saudi Arabia's). Despite attempts to maintain satisfactory serviceability of naval vessels, in the late 1980s, "only about half of the naval equipment was believed to be operational" (Imru, 1989:45). It also lacked its own air arm for maritime reconnaissance as well as communications equipment both in terms of quantity and quality.

4.2.2. The Air Force

Estimates of the Ethiopian Air Force's personnel strength usually ranged from 4,000 to 5,000 officers and airmen. The Air Force operated "35 combat aircraft in early 1977 before the weapons deluge from the Soviet Union. This included a final shipment of 8 F-5E fighter-bombers which the United States hesitantly supplied in April 1976" (ibid). The post-1974 regime had recognized that a strong air force was a key requisite for fielding a modern military force capable of both offensive and defensive operations.

Hence, high priority was assigned to the Air Force, which was to be greatly expanded. In early 1991, it included just about 150 combat aircraft. Almost all of the combat aircraft were acquired from the Soviet Union, and absorbing these combat aircraft was not easy for an air force which was heavily dependent on US-designed aircraft. The Mig-21 was the most numerous type in the Air Force inventory while the Mig-23 was the most capable type (its combat radius was greater, and it carried heavier weapons); the material from which this data is drawn indicated that the Air

Force's F-5A/Es were not completely phased out of firstline service. The Air Force also flied a small number of transport aircraft, a variety of training aircraft and around 54 helicopters; among these, the Mi-24 which is still the most heavily armed assault helicopter in the world, and the Mi-8 which is easy to maintain and versatile under the kinds of difficult conditions encountered in Ethiopia. The Air Force's tactical organization included eight fighter-ground attack squadrons, one transport squadron, one training squadron and a number of helicopter formations.

Table 2: Ethiopian Air Force's Order of Battle

Type	Aircraft	Number
Fighter Ground Attack	Soviet Mig-17F (1 squadron)	20
	Soviet Mig-21MF (6 squadrons)	78
	Soviet Mig-23BN (1 squadron)	40
	American F-5A/E (1 squadron)	21
Transport (1 squadron)	Soviet An-12	11
	Soviet An-22	2
	Soviet Il-14 (VIP)	1
Training (1 squadron)	Czech L-39	11
	Italian SF-260TP	9-21
	Soviet Mig-21U	5
Attack Helicopters	Soviet Mi-24	22
Transport Helicopters	Soviet Mi-8	32

Sources: Details of air assets are as accurate as possible. Most of the data is from IISS's
The Military Balance 1986-1987 (1986), and *The Military Balance 1989-1990* (1989).

The Air Force's HQ were at Debre Zeit, the site of the major air base, training center and maintenance workshop (where only older and rudimentary equipment was repaired). It also operated from other air bases, which were at Asmera, Bahir Dar, Goba, Dire Dawa, Jijiga and Mekele (ION, 1985:64). The missions of the Air Force included (Air, 1987:6):

1. tactical air support for ground forces: destroying enemy command posts and logistical centers; destroying enemy forces in trenches, in assembly areas and en route to the battlefield or retreating.

2. air logistics: providing for the land forces support services such as airlift service, casualty evacuation, provision of water and food, and ammunition replenishment.

3. in-depth attacks: destroying selected targets of military importance within enemy territory (air base, training centers, military installations, air defense systems…).

4. intelligence: detecting and identifying all hostile movements in the Ethiopian air space; drawing a continuous and comprehensive picture of the air situation.

The Air Force was also responsible for ensuring the protection of friendly territory and forces from enemy air attacks, that is air defense protection. Ethiopia's air defense capabilities consisted of the following Soviet-made material (IISS, 1989:127):

1. anti-aircraft tube artillery: ZU-23 (towed); ZSU-23-4 (four barrel 23 mm self propelled anti-aircraft guns to counter low-flying planes); M-1939 (37 mm anti-aircraft guns); and, ZSU-57-2 (57 mm self propelled anti-aircraft guns).

2. surface-to-air missiles: SA-2 *Volga* missiles with a slant range of 40 to 50 kilometers; SA-3 *Petchora* missiles which provided short-range defense against low-flying targets; and, the shoulder-launched SA-7 *Strella* missiles.

3. land-based radar equipment: the P-15 *Flat Face* target acquisition radar; the P-18; and, the P-37 *Bar Lock* long-range surveillance radar.

The Air Force 101st Training Center at Debre Zeit offered cadets a four-year course of study and training. Officer

> candidates, all of whom were volunteers, underwent four months of training and, upon entering the academy, signed a ten-year service contract. Separate curricula led to degrees in aeronautical engineering, electrical engineering and administration. Graduates received commissions as second lieutenants. Those selected as pilots attended a flight training program at Dire Dawa. In 1984, Dornier, the West German aircraft manufacturer provided pilot training at Debre Zeit. Pilots and mechanics also received training in Britain. The Air Force operated technical schools for enlisted personnel at Debre Zeit that trained aircraft maintenance and electronics technicians, communications operators and weapons specialists. Upon entering these courses, which lasted eighteen months to two years, recruits committed themselves to remain in active duty for ten years (DoA, 1991).

The pilots of the Ethiopian Air Force were generally considered by military analysts to be adequately trained, experienced and professional. The high morale and caliber of the pilots were proven during the Ogaden War when they virtually wiped out Somalia's Air Force. The Ethiopian Air Force was undoubtedly the largest and by far the most technically advanced air force in the Horn of Africa, though aircraft were initially sent to the Soviet Union for repairs and overhauls. Moreover, as time went by, internal divisions plagued the Air Force, and more seriously, its officers were engaged actively in anti-regime activities, the most notorious of which was the abortive coup d'état against Mengistu in1989.

During and after the coup, the service's ablest senior officers were killed: Major General Fanta Belay, the former commander (1977-1987) who was Minister of Industry; Major General Amha Desta, Fanta's US-trained former deputy and the actual commander; Brigadier General Solomon Begashaw, the deputy commander; Brigadier General Tesfu Desta, the head of the Air Force

Operations; Brigadier General Negussay Zergaw, commander of the Second Aerial Regiment and Asmera's base; Brigadier General Genanaw Mengistu, commander of the Sixth Aerial Regiment; and, Brigadier General Tekalegn Negussay, commander of the Air Defense detachment (Fontrier,1999:179 and 260). By 1991, it was crystal-clear that the Air Force never recovered from this loss of talent, and was suffering from low morale, indiscipline and inefficiency. Besides replacing many senior officers (Major General Alemayehu Agonafer was appointed commander of the Air Force in 1989), Mengistu temporarily grounded the Air Force.

4.2.3. The Ground Force

The Ground Force was not only the largest and most important service of the Ethiopian Armed Forces, but also the largest, best equipped and most battle-seasoned army in Africa with the exception of the armies of Egypt and South Africa. The general arrangement of the Ground Force from 1974 up to 1991 is difficult to ascertain because of "its increase in size, frequent reorganization and redeployment of units, and constant shuffling within the command structure" (DoA, 1991).

(1) Size, Organization, Disposition and Tactical Formation:

The Ground Force, which almost invariably constituted around 97% of the Armed Forces' personnel, had expanded in size from 46,000 regular soldiers in 1974, to 50,000 in 1977, and 250,000 in 1988. One unchanging feature of the Ground Force was perpetual reorganization. At first, land forces were divided into People's Divisions. Then, they were grouped into

Revolutionary Liberation Armies, the 1st Revolutionary Liberation Army stationed in Eritrea and the 2nd Revolutionary Liberation Army stationed in the Ogaden. They were afterwards organized into Task Forces, and, in the early 1980s, Regional Commands (*Iz*) were constituted: the Northern Command in Asmera, the Southern Command in Awassa, the Eastern Command in Harar, and the Central Command in Addis Ababa (Tekeste, n.d.:35).

The most noticeable reorganization, however, was made in 1988 when the Ground Force was at the height of its strength, and yet, at the same time feeling the swelling pressure of insurgent groups. The Ground Force was configured into four Revolutionary Armies, which were formed on a territorial basis:

1. the 1st Revolutionary Army: its HQ in Harar and stationed in the southeast of the country (Hararghe), and tasked to control the Ethio-Somali border, the activities of Ethiopian insurgent groups such as the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia and the Oromo Liberation Front as well as those of Somali insurgent groups opposing the regime of Siad Bare and supported by Ethiopia such as the Somali National Movement (Fontrier, 1999:148). It also had a training mission for the other units of the Ground Force. It was "composed of 3 infantry divisions, 1 mechanized division, 1 tank brigade and 1 artillery brigade [all grouped in 1 corps] with a total manpower of 25,817. Its armaments included 218 pieces of artillery of different calibers, 114 tanks, 15 armored personnel carriers, 74 mortars, 383 anti-aircraft guns and 383 anti-tank weapons" (Tekeste, n.d.:37).

2. the 2nd Revolutionary Army: its HQ in Asmera and stationed in the northern parts of Eritrea, its mission was to guard the Ethio-Sudanese border and control the flow of refugees. Self-

evidently, however, it was principally charged to quell the activities of the EPLF,[7] and "organize the security of military and civil sites in particular in Asmera and Massawa" (Fontrier, 1999:148). The 2nd Revolutionary Army, which was the Ground Force's largest unit, was "composed of several tactical corps [4 corps] and had a total of 129,252 troops. Its possession of armaments included 306 pieces of artillery of different calibers, 281 tanks, 102 armored personnel carriers, 333 anti-aircraft guns and 1,915 anti-tank weapons" (Tekeste, n.d.:37).

3. the 3rd Revolutionary Army: its HQ initially set up in Mekele and assigned in Tigray, Wello, Gonder, and Gojam, it was tasked to control the Ethio-Sudanese border, and to overcome the activities of the TPLF, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement and the OLF. It was also charged with "ensuring the security of the installations of Asab's harbor, of the port itself and of the island of Haleb as well as the telecommunication sites of Asab, Dessie and Bahir Dar" (Fontrier, 1999:149). It "was composed of 3 task forces with a total manpower of 67,005. Its weaponry included 103 pieces of artillery of different calibers, 208 tanks, 25 armored personnel carriers, 106 mortars, 65 anti-aircraft guns and 501 anti-tank weapons" (Tekeste, n.d.:38).

4. the 4th Revolutionary Army: stationed in the south of Shoa, in Arussi, Wollega, Illubabor, Kafa, Gemu Gofa, Sidamo and Bale, it was tasked to "control the Ethio-Kenyan, the Ethio-Sudanese and Ethio-Somali borders as well as regulate the activities of the SPLA significantly supported by Ethiopia since its foundation in 1983" (Fontrier, 1999:149). It was composed of 3 corps and had a 26,638-strong personnel, and possessed "38 pieces of

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[7] According to Ethiopian military intelligence estimates, in 1989, the EPLF maintained a "regular" fighting force of around 30,000 men and women organized in 6 infantry divisions and 1 mechanized division.

artillery, 12 armored personnel carriers, 33 mortars, 63 anti-aircraft guns and 429 anti-tank

weapons but no tanks" (Tekeste, n.d.:38).

It has to be noted that "there were differences between the four Revolutionary Armies in terms of

the quantity and number of their combat means" (Fontrier, 1999:149). Yet, their military

structure remained the same. Each Revolutionary Army (*abiyotawi serawit*) consisted of one to

four corps (*cor*) or task forces (*gibre hayl*). The corps had a territorial and operational vocation

while the task force was created for a particular temporary mission; despite this conceptual

difference, however, they were both created to exercise a much-needed control over a profusion

of divisions, and did not have a fixed manpower apportionment (ibid:150). The corps or task

force was in turn divided into two or more divisions (*kifletor*).

There were four types of divisions. "The infantry division and the mountain division which were

classical operational units utilizing their brigades in a comprehensive maneuver. Airborne

divisions and motorized divisions, though, are rarely employed integrally in one single

movement" (ibid:56). The infantry division was the basic unit of the Ground Force, which had

33 infantry divisions in the late 1980s. One infantry division (11,000 men) was arranged into 4

infantry brigades (each infantry brigade or *bergad* consisting of 2,000 men) along with artillery,

tank, engineer, medical, communications and other administrative support units. The battalions

or *shalaka* (each with 800 men) were divided into companies or *shambel* (200 men each),

companies into platoons or *meto* (32 men each), and platoons into the smallest units, which were

known as squads or *guad* (9 men each).

The Ground Force also had a number of independent brigades. The most significant unit was the 2,000-strong Special Force Brigade stationed in Addis Ababa, and primarily tasked to "safeguard Colonel Mengistu and his entourage" (Tekeste, n.d.:38), and by extension Addis Ababa. This praetorian anti-coup force was organized into four battalions, possessed more than 70 tanks, and was positioned within the presidential palace. Though "a senior officer was posted to command the whole brigade [Brigadier General Getatchew Shibeshi and then Brigadier General Geramaw Bekele], he had no right to give orders and instructions" (ibid:39). Other independent brigades included paratroop brigades, commando brigades and heavy artillery brigades (Fontrier, 1999:55).

(2) The Command Setting:

The Ground Force's overall activities fell under a commander and his deputy, who were performing the role of an intermediary organ between the High Command and the combat units, and had at their disposal "three offices – Operations-Intelligence, Logistics-Rear Services and Training" (Fontrier, 1999:54). Major General Kifelegne Yibsa served as commander of the Ground Force until 1985 when he was replaced by Major General Hailu Gebre Mikael, who was executed after the 1989 coup in which he was involved as was his deputy, Major General Alemayehu Desta. Embible Ayele (Colonel in 1977) was called back from his civilian functions (he was secretary of the Council of the State), promoted Major General, and appointed commander of the Ground Force. The topmost units, the above-discussed Revolutionary Armies, were commanded by officers who held the rank of Major General, but did not always have extensive experience in combat command or a sense of duty (See Table 3).

(3) Supply and Mobility:

In consultation with the most important supply authority (the Ministry of Defense's Administration and Logistics Department), the Logistics-Rear Services office handled the Ground Force's supply problems. In 1977, the Ethiopian land forces had lost wide stretches of territory in Eritrea and in the Ogaden due mainly to serious shortcomings of coordination and securing of food, weaponry and ammunition, fuel and medical supplies. And then came the Soviet and Cuban advisors who "assisted the Ethiopian Army in significantly improving its own logistical system" (Barrows, 1985:112).

Notwithstanding this improvement, the Ground Force's supply system was plagued by widespread corruption. Indeed, "many of the logistics officers were known to be highly corrupt…the army deployed in the battle fronts complained of shortage of ration, clothing, fuel etc. The shortage was not because government stores and depots were empty" (Tekeste, n.d.:65). In fact, the Ground Force disposed of a considerable stock of weapons (courtesy of the Soviet Union and despite the high level of warfare throughout the 1980s) and reserves of provisions and petrol (exempting the Ground Force from the severe food and fuel shortage crippling the rest of the country), which were used for the sideline business deals of logistics officers and their connections in the highest spheres of government.

Table 3: The Commanders of the Revolutionary Armies

Command Post	Commanding General	Comments
1st Rev. Army	Major General Berhanu Jembere	commissioner of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and a major in 1977; appointed in 1989
2nd Rev. Army	Major General Demise Bulto	involved in the 1989 coup and killed in Asmera
	Major General Wubeshet Dessie	head of the administration and finance of the WPE and a major in 1977; appointed in 1989
	Major General Hussein Ahmed	a University graduate, fled by helicopter to Saudi Arabia in 1991
3rd Rev. Army	Major General Mulatu Negash	a professional soldier who, however, spent several years in non-combatant posts
4th Rev. Army	Major General Zeleke Beyene	a longtime supporter of Mengistu

Among the more professional problems of supply was the considerable distance between the main bases as well as between the bases and military outposts, thus extending internal supply lines. For instance, some 1,000 kilometers separate Asmera and Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the country has mountainous and rugged terrain as well as vast stretches of desert, which hamper the use of all weather roads (which were inadequate, only about 15,898 kilometers long in 1989; CSA, 1994:129). For example, "the road from Addis Ababa to the north follows the line of the great eastern escarpment which it climbs and descends at several points (e.g., 2,000 meters at Debre Sina, 1,000 meters at Alamata and 600 meters over Amba Alaghi)" (Last, 1965:181).

The Ground Force possessed hundreds of transport trucks. Its standard trucks were the Soviet manufactured Zil-131 and Ural-375 as well as the East German-manufactured Ifa-L, which all had exceptional cross-country capabilities, and were maintained quite adequately in the force's

own workshops though "availability of spare parts and costs were…matters of continuous dispute" (Gilkes, 1994:730). It also utilized APCs (See upcoming ground order of battle). These trucks and APCs were, however, not sufficient to supply and transport its vast masses of troops, and were consequently supplemented by requisitioned civilian buses and trucks.

The air transport capacity was relatively small, consisting of one transport squadron with 13 Antonovs (the An-12 could convey 90 equipped men, weapons and light vehicles, and its range with maximum load was 1,400 kilometers) and a group of Mi-8 helicopters (which could fly 24 equipped men and weapons as well as loads of other supplies). Yet, backed by the ubiquitous Ethiopian Airlines which somewhat represented an auxiliary fleet of potential troop-carrying aircraft, it was sufficient to transport troops and military supplies in a relatively short period of time, albeit on a medium scale (battalion-size units) and on short distances. It even made possible the development and use of Airborne troops.

(3) Order of Battle:

The Ground Force fielded an essentially Soviet-supplied order of battle, which were mostly of high or medium quality, and were "specifically designed so as to require minimum maintenance in the field" (Bonds, 1980:189). According to the authoritative International Institute for Strategic Studies, in 1989, it had an estimated 750 battle tanks in service: 30 American M-47, 20 older T-34, 600 of the standard T-54/-55, and 100 of the more powerful T-62 Soviet models.[8] The Ground Force had an inventory of around 240 infantry fighting vehicles (200 BDRM-1/-2

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[8] The tank depot was in Nazareth, 90 kilometers south of Addis Ababa (ION, 1985:63).

and 40 BMP-1). It also had an estimated 600 BTR-40/-60/-152 APCs. It deployed some 700 Soviet-made and towed artillery pieces, including 130 of the advanced and effective D-30 howitzer and M-1938 howitzer (122 mm), 48 of the simple and reliable M-46 gun (130 mm) and 12 of the powerful D-20 howitzer (152 mm). Furthermore, the Ground Force possessed a variety of lethal mortars, including 200 M-2/-30 (107 mm) and 100 M-38 (120 mm), and the devastating 122 mm BM-21 rocket launchers. The Soviet-produced AT-3 Sagger made up the force's anti-tank inventory (IISS, 1989:127). Finally, the Ground Force maintained large quantities of 9 mm Makarov pistols, of the extremely reliable AK-47 (Kalashnikov) rifles, and of small-arms ammunition as well as communications equipment.

Table 4: Comparison of Major Ground Assets in
the Horn of Africa, including Egypt (1989)

Assets	Ethiopia	Somalia	Sudan	Kenya	Djibouti	Egypt
Tanks	750	290	175	76	-	2,425
APCs/IFVs	840	519	337	88	63	3,695
Twd. Arty.	700	210	159	56	-	1,120

Source: IISS's *Military Balance 1989-1990* (1989); APC stands for armored personnel carrier, IFV for infantry fighting vehicle, Twd. Art. for towed artillery.

(4) Education and Training:

The Genet Military Academy, under which the Harar Military Academy and the Holeta Military School operated after 1977, trained cadets for commissioning as regular officers with the rank of second lieutenant. Afterwards, they received specialized training at technical schools operated by the infantry, artillery or armor branches, and strengthened by Soviet or Cuban instructors. These schools emphasized "preparation for the supervision of technical personnel responsible for

maintaining Soviet-supplied weapons, communications equipment, and electronic gear" (DoA, 1991). Unfortunately, many of the officers leaving the academy as well as the schools went on to perform their duties negligently, lacked leadership qualities and enthusiasm in combat actions, and were to become serious obstacles for the general improvement of the Ground Force. Furthermore, there was no clear delineation between command officers (those exercising effective command) and staff officers. The Ground Force's recruits followed an abbreviated (twelve-week) basic training program before being assigned to operational units or to technical schools for specialized training. It should be noted that political commissars were assigned to all educational or training facilities.

(5) Morale, Discipline and the Northern Protracted War:

The incertitude created by the 1974 Revolution, combined with the ensuing turnover in command personnel, caused

> a crisis of confidence that would last until the introduction of Soviet and Cuban advisors in training and command positions in the late 1970s. Prolonged exposure to combat and political disaffection contributed to desertion, attacks on officers and war-zone atrocities. Incompetence among commanders was also a problem. For instance, the government tried and executed several officers for indiscipline and a lack of military judgement resulting in the death of soldiers in battle. From 1976 to 1978, the command crisis grew worse because of the army's rapid expansion. As a result of this growth, junior officers and NCOs often advanced to field leadership without adequate preparation. Purges and defections by officers of Eritrean origin [to the EPLF?] were also factors in the poor quality of field leadership. Growing disaffection throughout the army prompted several mutinies by front-line troops, including one in Jijiga in 1977, during which officers and NCOs demanded Mengistu's resignation (DoA, 1991).

From 1978 to 1985, exploiting the seemingly heightened morale of the troops after the victory in the Ogaden, the regime launched a series of offensives in Eritrea against the EPLF, the largest insurgent group. Despite the superior number of troops and firepower involved, all Ethiopian offensives, which placed too much stress on big-unit tactics instead of more mobile and flexible tactics, failed and resulted in high Ethiopian casualties. The most important and noteworthy offensive was the "Red Star Campaign" of 1982, which involved large conventional units under the personal command of Mengistu, using some 200,000 troops, tanks, heavy artillery weapons and rocket launchers, and assisted by aerial bombardment of insurgent positions as well as the wholesale razing of villages to deprive the group of local support (Dawit, 1989:106-109). The long drawn-out multi-pronged strategy undoubtedly forced the outnumbered and outgunned EPLF forces, which sustained high casualties, to retreat to the far north of Eritrea, at Nacfa. Nevertheless, the Ethiopian forces' failure to capitalize on their military gains and destroy the insurgent group permanently shifted the strategic initiative away from them. For most of the mid-1980s, the 400-kilometer long Nacfa front separated the two warring sides.

In 1987, the EPLF broke out of Nacfa and attacked the strategic town of Afabet (100 kilometers north of Asmera), which was fitted out in 1979 as the main HQ and supply center for the area of greatest fighting. Dawit called it the actual "command center in Eritrea and the largest military garrison in Ethiopia with the heaviest and most sophisticated armaments" (1989:364). The stage was set for the turning point in the country's protracted internal war. After 48 hours of combat and "in a display of brilliant improvisation" (Gilkes, 1995:39), the EPLF captured the town, took prisoner and killed around 15,000 Ethiopian troops (including three Soviet advisers); it also seized around 50 tanks along with a large number of artillery pieces, rocket launchers and anti-

aircraft guns, almost doubling its military strength. The success of the EPLF can be attributed to its adoption of "mobile and subsequently fixed positional warfare" (Pool, 1998:26), to the dramatic execution of the Nacfa front commander, Brigadier General Tariku Ayene ("one of the educated elite generals – defiant, but well-liked by his soldiers and his colleagues," Dawit, 1989:364) on Mengistu's orders, and to the fact that Ethiopian intelligence was generally mediocre and the enemy had more valuable information (Gilkes, 1994:732). The insurgent group then went on to besiege and eventually capture Massawa, and then Asmera.

Likewise, the TPLF fighting forces, which at first specialized in small-unit operations such as infiltration and setting ambushes (the classical techniques of guerilla warfare), developed into an increasingly well-organized and heavily armed units reinforced by the Ground Force's defecting officers and captured weapons. After 1989, they launched a sustained offensive, which culminated in the battle of Shire. In the course and aftermath of this decisive battle, the overextended and therefore vulnerable units of the Ground Force suffered their second biggest defeat, and were effectively pushed out of Tigray enduring heavy losses – 12,000-13,000 men killed or taken prisoner (For the most revealing exposés on this episode, consult Tekeste, 1994 and Tesfamariam, 1998).

The Afabet and Shire debacles, and the subsequent loss of territory, practically reduced to nil the morale and discipline of the Ground Force, and consequently sapped its military effectiveness. In fact, the Ground Force virtually ceased to serve as an effective offensive force. Mutinies, desertions and defections proliferated among its battle-hardened soldiers, who after all had gained a reputation for tenacity on the battlefield. But, most importantly, many demoralized

senior officers – from the Chief of Staff, the commander of the Ground Force, and practically all of the commanders of the four Revolutionary Armies and their staffs – mounted a coup d'état to oust Mengistu. The two-day coup epitomized the extent of the growing discontent with the (unwinable, bloody and destructive) war in northern Ethiopia. Yet, this did not deter Mengistu to engage in a comprehensive purge which enabled him to eliminate opposition in the Ground Force. But, in the long run, the purge further undermined the task of command of units, which were plagued by lack of morale and indiscipline, and ultimately disintegrated.

4.3. Foreign Military Assistance

After the 1977-1978 Ogaden War, the Soviet Union became Ethiopia's principal supplier of weapons and training (of military units). Ethiopia also received military assistance from other socialist states, including Cuba, East Germany and, by the late 1980s, North Korea.

4.3.1. The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union initiated a massive military assistance to Ethiopia after the 1977 Somali invasion of the Ogaden. This assistance covered the supply of about U.S.$1 billion worth of weapons, including hundreds of tanks, armored vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters, surface-to-air missiles, diverse artillery items as well as light weapons (Porter, 1984:201). It also involved the launching of a control satellite, and the strengthening of the Ethiopian forces by as far as 1,500 Soviet advisors and thousands of Cuban military personnel (Ayoob, 1980:159). In 1978, Ethiopia concluded a twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union.

This accord secured for the latter the use of the Asmera airfield from which maritime reconnaissance flights were made. The Soviet navy was also provided dry-dock and other support facilities on, and unrestricted use of the Dahlak Islands (Dawit, 1989:104). This greatly extended the Soviet naval presence into the Red Sea and surveillance in the Indian Ocean.

Lured by this strategic gain, the Soviet Union stepped up its assistance by providing, in 1982 to support the campaigns in Eritrea, weapons which had an estimated value of US $ 2 billion. By 1984, the Soviet Union had provided more than US $ 4 billion in military assistance, with weapons' deliveries in 1984 worth approximately US $ 1.4 billion. In part because of this deluge of weapons, the Soviet Union also intensified its training assistance efforts in Ethiopia. To this end, there were 1,900 military advisors in 1981, 2,600 in 1984, 1,400 in 1988 and 1,700 in 1989 (DoA, 1991). The Soviet trainers[9] had emphasized training the military personnel of Ethiopia's three services in the operation and maintenance of weapon systems as well as in military tactics and doctrine. In addition, by 1984, more than 1,600 Ethiopian military personnel have been trained in the Soviet Union (trained at the Moscow' s Frunze Academy or the Leningrad Naval Academy). The quantity and value of weapons deliveries declined after 1985, with US $ 774 million in that year and US $ 292 million in 1986. In fact, the Soviet Union, after the appearance of Gorbachev, reduced progressively and significantly its military commitments refusing to conclude any more weapons contracts and withdrawing its advisors from war-zones (ibid).

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[9] Ethiopian trainees (as well as senior officers for that matter) resented their Soviet trainers' heavy-handed arrogance and lack of acknowledgement of their war experience.

4.3.2. Cuba

From 1977 to 1978, out of a genuine streak of "proletarian internationalism," Cuba deployed in Ethiopia 17,000 troops, many of whom were brought in from Angola. Organized in three brigades, these troops went far beyond their training and advisory missions, and actually participated directly in combat against Somali forces hastening the Ethiopian victory (Fontrier, 1999:63). Cuban troops were never involved in Eritrean operations, but their continued presence in eastern Ethiopia enabled the Ethiopian command to redeploy many of its troops to the northern part of the country. Ethiopian military personnel were also sent to Cuba for training in political indoctrination, intelligence as well as training management and logistics.

In 1988, there were around 400 Cuban military advisors besides some 3,000 troops. In Addis Ababa, a forty-man transit base was installed; at Hurso Military School, 250 Cuban instructors provided armor training to Ethiopian cadets; 50 to 100 Cuban instructors were members of the Harar Military Academy's faculty; and, 500 Cuban troops equipped with dozens of tanks, armored vehicles and artillery pieces were stationed at Jijiga, and manned the town's two radar sites. In addition, a 1,200-strong Cuban brigade, including the Cuban staff, was stationed in Dire Dawa. It occupied six barracks accommodating its troops, tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, transport and service elements (ibid:195).

4.3.3. East Germany and North Korea

East Germany's military assistance to Ethiopia started in 1977 (immediately after the outbreak of the Ogaden war), initiated at the urge of the Soviet Union (Bittman, 1981:217). It provided logistical and command advice, and gave hundreds of Ethiopian officers ideological training. "During the 1978 Ethiopian offensive against the EPLF, East German engineers reportedly built flanking roads, which enabled Ethiopian tanks to attack behind EPLF lines" (Fontrier, 1999:62). Moreover, East German military advisors manned artillery and rocket units in Eritrea. In 1979, East Germany and Ethiopia signed a treaty which laid the groundwork for increased military assistance (Valenta et al, 1981:55). For most of the 1980s, East Germany provided Ethiopia diverse forms of military intelligence assistance. For instance, East German intelligence officers participated in the 1982 "Red Star Campaign", and manned in 1988 Ethiopian communications sites in Asmera (Fontrier, 1999:62).

After the waning of Soviet military support in the late 1980s, Ethiopia sought the military assistance of North Korea. In 1985, North Korea had furnished the Ethiopian forces light weapons, ammunition and general military equipment. Three years later, following a formal military accord, a perceptible intensification of North Korean assistance occurred: 200 military advisors, headed by a general, were deployed in Ethiopia, and 12 tanks along with light weapons and ammunition were delivered. The most important contribution of North Korea was its technical and financial support for the construction of weapons' factories, which only achieved a limited level of development: tank assembly factory near Debre Zeit, Mojo's factory of small arms (Gaffat Engineering, where 200 North Korean technicians were assigned), the explosives'

factory at Diqa, and the artillery shells' factory at Guder. After 1989, about 700 North Korean military advisors were engaged in the training of a 20,000-man special operations force at Tatek 4 military camp (100 kilometers south of Goba, Bale), and were also assigned to the 2nd and 3rd Revolutionary Armies (ibid:198-201)

Chapter Five: The Armed Forces' Employment for National Security

5.1. Conduct of Strategic Intelligence

This section is devoted to the study of a pivotal function of the Armed Forces, the conduct of strategic intelligence. This function included the analysis of the intelligence gathered on Ethiopia's neighboring states, and the coordination of covert activities which took the form of support to insurgencies in Sudan and Somalia.

5.1.1. Intelligence Assessment of Neighboring States

Intelligence analysis was the weakest link in the MID. Many analysts did not have the appropriate education and experience in regional affairs, military strategy and international politics. Indeed, despite the fact that a handful of them were trained in the Soviet Union in strategic intelligence, they certainly had insufficient proficiency in analysis and report writing. Furthermore, the analysts were not allowed the scope for dissenting opinions, and were aware (as their superiors were) that Mengistu tended to choose the analysis which supported his own views and policies. Thus, the analysts had become so alienated that they deliberately or unconsciously ruined the overall intelligence effort.

It is in this context that the analysts produced summaries, reports and in-depth studies which included maps and diagrams. These products, which took the form of either long-range

assessments or current assessments of immediate importance, determined the real intent of a potential one-on-one adversary to wage or influence war, propaganda, espionage and subversion against Ethiopia, and also the elements bound to play significant roles in how it might respond to a conflict with Ethiopia (military aspects such as organization and order of battle, political leadership and goals, economic activities, social composition and foreign relations).

These intelligence assessments were based on information gathered from a variety of mutually reinforcing sources. These sources included publicly available material such as international and neighboring states' broadcasts, newspapers, periodicals and books (especially in the fields of Political Science and International Relations), which were handled by the MID's Research and Analysis Directorate (MID, 1989:10). The most cherished type of sources was, however, the human source. The MID ran a network of personnel who collected information both overtly and clandestinely from human resources outside Ethiopia. On the overt side, military attachés gathered information in neighboring states.

On the clandestine side, the following components performed espionage-type information gathering under the responsibility of the Covert Operations Directorate (ibid:8): professional agents extensively trained to operate secretly for a long period of time in a neighboring state, and defectors of a neighboring state who provided information because of sympathy, pursuit of financial gain, ego enhancement or blackmail. Finally, signals intelligence represented a high-priority means of information gathering. The MID's signals intelligence section conducted the interception and decoding of the traffic of radio communications emanating across the border as well as direction-finding to locate hostile transmitters both outside and inside Ethiopia through

the use of fixed sites and mobile ground assets (upgraded thanks to a Soviet-induced increase in technical sophistication).

To get a glimpse of how analysis was finalized in the MID, it is helpful to closely study two sample intelligence products which were written in the crucial years of 1979 and 1981: the first product is a ten-page intelligence report entitled "External Pressures on Socialist Ethiopia" and submitted in 1979, and the second product is a three-page intelligence summary entitled "Ethiopia and its Neighbors" and submitted in 1981. Although both products were intended to cover the entire Horn of Africa region, their focus was concentrated on Somalia, Sudan and Egypt, an emphasis which revealed what the post-revolution regime was primarily concerned with.

The 1979 intelligence report began its analysis by presenting a table of the numerical strength of Somalia (102,000) and Sudan (48,000) as well as the estimated strength of the Egyptian expeditionary force in Sudan. It then proceeded to give the land, aerial and naval orders of battle of Somalia and Sudan as well as the military equipment deployed by Egypt in Sudan, primarily 48 combat and transport aircraft, again presented in tabular form (MID, 1979:1-2). Next, it examined the major military and political activities effectuated by Somalia and Sudan. According to the report, Somalia was "recruiting and training troops; strengthening defensive positions along our common border. Her armed forces are at first degree alert, are gathering information about our troop movements. Intensive refresher training is undertaken for her armed forces' personnel" (ibid:3).

When it came to Sudan, the report stressed that "Sudanese troops are reinforced by about 23,000 Egyptian troops which are [stationed] in important and strategic locations in Sudan. Sudanese armed forces are being strengthened with more military hardware…The Sudanese government assumes that Ethiopia will attack it any time, so their armed forces are at full alert" (ibid). The Sudanese were also carrying out information gathering operations within Ethiopia, expanding the Kassala airport near the Ethio-Sudanese border to accommodate combat aircraft, and "have started widening and asphalting the roads from Port Sudan to Karrora and from Port Sudan to Tokar" (ibid:3-4).

The report then profiled the support granted by Somalia and Sudan to Ethiopian insurgent groups. "Somalia is training and infiltrating all types of anti-unity and anti-revolutionary forces into the territory of Ethiopia. It is supplying anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines to these forces to sabotage our unity and our revolution. It helps them to ambush our convoys and attack small posts in our territory" (ibid:4). The report was convinced that the insurgent groups operating in Eritrea were receiving

> military, logistical and other aids from the reactionary Arab regimes [Egypt and Saudi Arabia were singled out] through Sudan. They are recruiting and training additional manpower from among the Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. Sudan has already allowed the separatists to open an office [in Khartoum] and it is allowing them to use its mass media for subversion against Ethiopia…Sudan has given permission for the separatists to transport by plane the aid given to them by Imperialist powers and the reactionary Arab regimes (ibid:5).

Furthermore, the report analyzed the military assistance Somalia and Sudan enjoyed as well as the two states' alliance with Egypt. Somalia was provided anti-tank weapons, training and spare

parts by Egypt; training, advice and weapons by China; radar and air defense gun systems by the US (apparently through Saudi Arabia); military trucks and armored vehicles by Italy; fuel and financial backing by Saudi Arabia; and, anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons by Pakistan (ibid:6). "A high-level delegation from Somalia has visited China. The delegation was led by the Somali defense minister and had the air force commander and the naval commander as members of the delegation. This shows that there is something big going on in the military field between the two countries" (ibid).

Sudan, on its part, was planning to raise two mechanized brigades with the weapons provided by the West. "According to the press statement given by president Nimeiri on June 4,1979, the US and French governments are studying the military aid project that is to be given to Sudan" (ibid:7). Egypt was supplying spare parts and technical advice for Sudan's Soviet-supplied equipment which had become unoperational owing to the shortage of spare parts and maintenance technicians. More importantly, "a military pact has been signed between the two countries in 1976" (ibid:8), following which Egypt stationed troops in Sudan, trained Sudanese personnel, and "undertook joint military studies and planning and in case of aggression against one, the other will come to its rescue" (ibid).

Finally, the report indicated that, due to the fact that "Ethiopia is the source of the Blue Nile; due to Ethiopia's Socialist ideology; due to Ethiopia's strategic position in the Horn of Africa, the Imperialists and the Arab reactionary regimes have brought together Sudan and Somalia against Ethiopia" (ibid:10). Also, reflecting the Ethiopian visceral distrust of Egypt, it postulated that "it

is due to this that Egypt regards Sudanese territory as providing added depth to her strategic aims, and is giving Somalia an all-out military aid within her capacity" (ibid).

The second product, the 1981 intelligence summary, attempted to define the geopolitical aspect of the environment in which Ethiopia was located. "Ethiopia is bordering the sea route joining Asia with Europe and also the oil route, and near to the oil wells of the Middle East. Any world power that has good or bad intentions on the East African region cannot do so without touching or passing via Ethiopia. Hence, Ethiopia's geographical location has made it very important in global strategy" (MID, 1981:3). The summary also extended Ethiopia's image of a militantly Christian state encircled by hostile Muslim neighbors bent on carving parts of its territory and threatening its survival as a united and independent state (a sort of Christian island in a Muslim sea). Indeed, it held that "since the inception of the religion of Islam in the Middle East, Ethiopia was put into a very high pressure due to religious expansionism. This pressure was intensified after the discovery of petroleum, the accumulation of petro-dollar and its use as a political weapon" (ibid).

The summary pointed out that, since its independence in 1960, "Somalia had used and is using every opportunity to sabotage our unity, her main aim being to annex a big chunk of our territory" (ibid:1). It drew from this analysis the conclusion that "in Somalia, any government that may be in power, whether Socialist or other, will always be our enemy. The gap of our disagreement is so wide that it will only be solved by one of us being militarily superior" (ibid). The summary also judged that whenever Sudan wanted to apply pressure on Ethiopia, it basically played two cards. "The first is to increase material and moral support to the secessionist

movements in Northern Ethiopia; and the second is to increase the number of and strengthen its troops in our common border" (ibid). Finally, the summary anticipated that "Sudan is unable to launch a large-scale sustained conventional military operation against Ethiopia. However the Sudanese are capable of launching small-scale short duration cross border raids" (ibid), and concluded that, in strict military terms, such attacks would cause little damage.

5.1.2. Support for Sudanese and Somali Insurgent Groups

In 1983, civil war was resuscitated as a result of Nimeiri's imposition of the Sharia or Islamic law on all sectors of the Sudanese population – Muslims, Christians and Animists alike. The widely perceived racial and religious discrimination against the mainly Christian and Animist Black-Africans from the south of Sudan by the Arabs from Sudan's north (essentially Muslim and controlling the country's government and economy) contributed largely to the commencement of the war. This war, which provoked an influx of refugees into Ethiopia, presented the latter's post-revolution regime the opportunity to reciprocate for Sudan's support to Ethiopian insurgent groups by giving support to the emergent SPLA. The SPLA, which was committed to a unified but "new Sudan" (advocating national solutions to the southern problem, including regional autonomy), was initially a motley formation composed of multiple factions and leaders. The Ethiopian regime lent its weight behind a former colonel of the Sudanese army named John Garang, a "highly educated [he earned an economics Ph.D. in the US where he also received his military training], intelligent and quiet man" (Dawit, 1989:114), with whom Mengistu established close personal ties (ibid; Johnson, 1998:60).

It was thus with Mengitu's acquiescence that the SPLA was allowed to use Ethiopian territory as a multipurpose safe haven, and was granted multiform and substantial support. The SPLA was supplied Soviet-made weapons and ammunition, including anti-tank guns, mortars and mortar shells, and heavy machine guns. Shipments were occasionally conveyed inside southern Sudan by Ethiopian helicopters (Fontrier, 1999:157; Salih, 1990:216). Military training was another important aspect of Ethiopian support. SPLA soldiers were trained in Ethiopian military facilities, and were even sent to Cuba for advanced instruction (Woodward, 1996:123). The SPLA operated a number of training centers in western Ethiopia, such as the Bonga and Pagak in the Gambela area (Johnson, 1998:58); instruction was mainly assured by an Ethiopian battalion (Fontrier, 1999:157). In addition, the SPLA's soldiers were supplied food (Dawit, 1989:158), and, when wounded, received medical treatment at Asosa's hospital (Salih, 1990:218). The Ethiopian regime also accorded the SPLA a financial support in quite generous terms, though the proportions of this support cannot be precisely estimated on the basis of available information, which is incomplete and unreliable.

Exhaustive intelligence on the location and strength of Sudanese bases, troop movements and lines of communications, reconnaissance and punitive overflights, were passed to the SPLA, and proved vital in its military operations. In fact, during engagements between Sudanese troops and the SPLA, Ethiopian units gave the latter fire support and sometimes directly participated in these engagements. For instance, el-Mahdi, the Sudanese prime minister, "accused Ethiopian forces of firing artillery shells and rockets across the border in the attack on Kurmuk [in 1987], and claimed that 20 of their soldiers had been killed and a further wounded" (ibid:217). The

Ethiopian regime also enabled the SPLA to broadcast a radio program, which "became essential listening right across Sudan" (Woodward, 1996:123), from Ethiopian soil.

The MID's Covert Operations Directorate was directly involved in this supporting effort. It handled day-to-day relations with the SPLA's HQ, checked internal dissent within it (Johnson, 1998:60), and controlled its base camps within Ethiopia. It also managed financial transfers to the SPLA, coordinated logistical arrangements (especially the deliveries of weapons and ammunition), supervised training programs and fire support with other elements of the Ethiopian Armed Forces (such as the 4th Revolutionary Army and the Air Force). Finally, it was responsible for ensuring the secrecy of the support's details since a disclosure of its true extent would threaten its effectiveness and risk major embarrassment to the regime.

The post-revolution regime also wanted to keep secret its support to two Somali insurgent groups. The groups, namely the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM), "were cards for the Ethiopians to play against their enemy Siad Bare and a counterpart to the WSLF, the guerrilla organization sponsored by the Somali government" (Korn, 1986:76). The SSDF was practically an Ethiopian creation, which was composed of defectors (officers and NCOs) from the Somali military, and was backed by Marehan and Darod clans; it also had "a strong contingent of Marxist intellectuals" (Compagnon, 1998:75). The SNM, which was a predominantly northern Issak group, was "more nationalistic and pro-Western and more jealous of its independence" (Korn, 1986:76); it was merely searching for a land base adjacent to Somalia to conduct military operations.

Both groups, however, depended for their existence and operations on the Ethiopian regime's support, which was supervised by the MID's Covert Operations Directorate. The Directorate closely monitored the groups' training camps (SSDF was actually trained by Ethiopian officers) as well as refugee camps, which were used as a sanctuary for food supply, recruitment and medical treatment (Compagnon, 1998:75). It managed the aid imparted to the groups in the form of money and weaponry, and tightly controlled the groups' leadership, sometimes using coercion as during the SSDF's 1983-1984 internal squabbles (ibid:77).

5.2. Repulsion of Foreign Aggression: The Ogaden War

Towards the middle of 1977, the Somali decision-makers took note of the substantial imbalance in military capabilities between their country and Ethiopia as well as the latter's political instability and international isolation. It was for them the best possible moment to escalate the long-standing conflict over the Ogaden to the brink of war, and launch a full-scale invasion. This section elaborates on the factors which converged in favor of war initiation, and how the Armed Forces – its main function being to defend Ethiopia against military invasion – performed in the war, which had two phases: early Somali successes and, after a dramatic turnaround, final Ethiopian successes.

5.2.1. The Road to War

The Somali military attained power in a 1969 coup d'état, organized itself in the Supreme Revolutionary Council, and adopted the socialist cause; its leader was Major General Siad Bare,

who served as the Army's Chief of Staff. A reputed hardline nationalist, Bare had sweeping power over political, foreign and defense matters, made decisions against little or no opposition, and did not hesitate to get rid of those who may object to them (Crozier, 1975:7). The military regime was committed to the creation of Greater Somalia" (as discussed in Chapter Two). But, while the former office holders initiated maximalist policies to achieve this goal without ever possessing the means, this regime chose to pursue a more calculated course. It became "a member of the Arab League [in 1974] and on friendly terms with rich as well as radical governments in the Arab World" (Ayoob, 1980:149), and successfully hosted the 1975 OAU summit. The Somali regime also struck an alliance with Sudan whose relations with Ethiopia had sharply deteriorated; it sent several delegations to Khartoum in order to lay grounds for cooperation against Ethiopia and further isolate it regionally.

More importantly, however, the regime embarked on an extensive military buildup program with the aim of creating the strongest military force in the Horn of Africa. It relied heavily on a willing supplier of weaponry and training, the Soviet Union. Beginning to assert itself in the Indian Ocean in the early 1970s, the Soviet Union "poured some $ 300 million worth of arms into Somalia" (Korn, 1986:29) between 1974 when the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed between the two countries and 1977. In the meantime, the Soviets provided the training of Somali military personnel in the effective use of the weaponry; 2,000 Soviet advisors and technicians were sent to Somalia, and some 1,700 Somali officers went to the Soviet Union.

Estimates of the 1977 personnel strength of the Somali Armed Forces varied from 25,000 to 30,000, a force which exceeded Somalia's realistic defensive needs. The Somali Armed Forces

fielded an essentially superior equipment both quantitatively and qualitatively to that of its Ethiopian counterpart. In fact, in most categories of weapons, the Somali Armed Forces of 25,000-30,000 surpassed the corresponding inventory of the Ethiopian Armed Forces of roughly 55,000 (the former had, for instance, a tank force more than three times as large as the latter's, and the pre-war Somali Air Force was larger than Ethiopia's; see Appendix 4), and was deemed adequate to conduct offensive military operations and to sustain them as long as necessary. Its planners drew plans which aimed at securing "speedy military success" (Ayoob, 1980:152), and to match available weaponry with the anticipated scope and time of future operations so as to avoid that the latter exceed the limits of the possible attrition of weaponry, including ammunition and spare parts (Gilkes, 1994:724).

The Somali regime tasked its primary intelligence agency, the National Security Service, to collect information of all kinds with special focus on Ethiopia's political stability, the location and terrain of conceivable operations, Ethiopian troops' disposition and movements as well as their condition of preparedness. The information obtained[10] doubtless pointed to the fact that Ethiopia's post-1974 regime was led by inexperienced and exhausted military officers who faced multiple crises, had their eyes fixed on Eritrea, and feared a two-front war. It was also undermined by internal power struggles, was preoccupied by urban and rural unrest, and had "alienated almost all its neighbors as well as the United States for different reasons" (Ayoob, 1980:149).

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[10] The NSS, which was set up in 1969 and was headed by Brigadier General Ahmed Suleiman Abdulle (Bare's son-in-law, who was trained by the KGB and also served as head of Army Intelligence), combined internal security and external intelligence. It had expanded its capacity for eavesdropping (the Soviet Union lent used

Moreover, it was in a militarily disadvantaged position. The Ethiopian Armed Forces were increasingly short on weapons and spare parts, could not get all the weapons it requested from the US in order to offset Somalia's acquisitions. The forces had lost most of their best-trained and senior officers in the tumult of the 1974 Revolution, and were suffering from weakened discipline and military organization (Gilkes, 1994:721). They were stretched thin by the escalating war in Eritrea where about half of their regular personnel were bogged down as the insurgent groups intensified their offensives after 1975 and besieged Asmera (Ottaway(s), 1978:163). In fact, the Ogaden area was so militarily underdefended that the WSLF was "able to wrestle substantial portions from Ethiopian control" (Ayoob, 1980:149).

The superpowers' quest for influence and shifting designs also played a part in Somali calculations. The strategic value of Ethiopia had been eroded by "the transfer of the most important functions of the Kagnew communications base to Diego Garcia" (ibid:147). Parallely, the US saw Somalia as useful in Horn of Africa balance of power politics; the US hoped to nurture Somalia as a counterweight to an increasingly hostile, brutal and Marxist-Leninist leaning regime flirting with the Soviet Union. The use of the strategic port of Berbera also figured in US thinking. In April 1977, President Carter issued instructions to his inner circle of security policy advisers to seek better relations with Somalia (Halliday et al, 1981:226-338). The signals sent by the Carter administration to Somalia were, at best, mixed. At worst, it can be argued, they were taken by the Somali decision-makers as representing a green light from Washington for an Ogaden invasion (ibid:226).

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equipment), ran spying operations within Ethiopia, and exploited the already active presence of the WSLF (which made it possible for assessment by direct observation).

Further, Ayoob posited that "the Soviet decision to support the Ethiopian regime, militarily and politically, was responsible, more than anything else, in triggering off the Somali offensive in the Ogaden" (1980:150). The Soviets recognized Ethiopia as the pivotal country and greatest prize in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, "Ethiopia, with its population of more than thirty million – outstripping Somalia by a factor of ten – its larger territory and its position as the seat of the OAU and UNECA, no doubt impressed the Soviets as the bigger prize" (Korn, 1986:29). For the Somali decision-makers, the Soviet Union's decision could only alter the balance of power at the expense of their goals and designs. The Somali decision to resort to war was "to a large extent prompted by the desire to take advantage of Somali military superiority vis-à-vis Ethiopia while it lasted and before it was altered by the infusion of large-scale Soviet weaponry into Ethiopia and the adaptation of the Ethiopian armed forces to Soviet weapon systems" (Ayoob, 1980:151).

5.2.2. The Early Somali Successes

The Ethiopian regime's reading of the pre-war Somali intentions was clear as its intelligence sources noted that Somalia was preparing for a large-scale invasion (Dawit, 1989:34). Yet, it recognized at the same time that its forces were under-equipped and unprepared to organize an effective resistance against such invasion; apparently, few mines were laid and most garrisons were not on full alert (Gilkes, 1994:724). In June 1977, the WSLF, which "was headquartered in Mogadishu and had its training bases in Somali territory" (Gilkes, 1987:138), stepped up its operations. Its troops, which were "well-armed and coordinated, stiffened, and probably in many cases led by officers with Ogaden clan connections on 'leave' from the Somali army" (Farer, 1979:123), targeted military convoys, outposts and police stations, and succeeded in destroying

five bridges on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway. By late July 1977, maintaining a fast military tempo, the WSLF established its control over 60% of the Ogaden; coincidentally, Somali regular and mechanized units moved into Ethiopian territory. At that point, the combined manpower of the WSLF and Somali regular units probably approached 40,000 of which 15,000 were irregulars (the manned strength of the WSLF was estimated at about 6,000 in June 1977, increasing thereafter as thousands of ethnic Somalis living in the Ogaden joined it).

The Somali operations were under the command of Lieutenant General Mohamed Ali Samantar, who was simultaneously Somalia's Vice-President, Minister of Defense and Commander of the Somali National Army. Nevertheless, overall command was assumed by Bare, who mostly remained in Mogadishu; later on, Somali generals were to complain that he "had centralized command without the ability to receive communications from the field or to transmit instructions quickly and accurately" (Nelson, 1981:245). Because of its geographic proximity to the northern and strategic part of the Ogaden, Hargeisa, the Somali army's northern sector HQ served as the operational command and logistics center for the Somali forces. Before the war, the Somali army was organized into battalions (600 to 1,000 troops), but as the war was forthcoming "the standard infantry and mechanized infantry unit became the brigade, comprising of two to four battalions and having a total strength of 1,200 to 2,000" (ibid). There were "two main lines of advance in eastern Ethiopia, and a third attack into Bale and Sidamo through Dolo. The main attack by mechanized and tank units was through Gode and up to the full length of the Ogaden to Jijiga with a second attack along the railway line towards Dire Dawa, and through the mountains as well" (Gilkes, 1987:141).

Along these lines of advance, the Somali forces initially operated a 700 kilometers-long advance into Ethiopia, capturing 90% of the Ogaden which comprised up to a fourth of the latter's geographic area. Through swift strikes, the Somali forces captured the major towns in the southern part of the Ogaden, including Degahabur, Werder and Gode. If the Somali attack at Werder achieved surprise, caused significant casualties on Ethiopian forces and weakened their positions, the attacks on Degahabur and Gode (where there was an airstrip and an Ethiopian mechanized battalion) produced costly Somali losses. These attacks "pinpointed significant Ethiopian weaknesses in armor, artillery and static defenses" (Gilkes, 1994:724). In August 1977, the Somali forces suffered two setbacks when they tried to capture Dire Dawa, which was Ethiopia's third largest city, an important rail, industrial and commercial center, and the site of a strategic forward air base, and Jijiga, which was the easternmost Ethiopian stronghold, and a tank and radar base. At Jijiga,

> which was heavily defended by two brigades of the Ethiopian Third Division and at least two divisions of militia, the Somalis lost over half of their attacking force of three tank battalions, each of which contained over thirty tanks. A Somali attack by one tank battalion and a mechanized infantry brigade [the brigade was commanded by Brigadier General Mohamed Nur Galal] supported by artillery units was repulsed with heavy losses at Dire Dawa, where the airfield had the only remaining concrete surfaced runway available for use in Ethiopian air strikes into northern Somalia [especially the Somali troops' staging base, Hargeisa] and the northern Ogaden (Nelson, 1981:245).

The Somali troops' finest success of the war came in September 1977 when they captured Jijiga in their second attempt. Using Soviet-style tactics (massive artillery bombardment followed by massed infantry and mechanized assaults), three tank battalions overwhelmed the defending Ethiopian troops (ibid; Gilkes, 1994:725). After several days of seesaw fighting, during which

they inflicted heavy losses on Somali armor, the demoralized Ethiopian troops mutinied and withdrew from the city (Korn, 1986:39). When Jijiga eventually fell, the Somali forces "acquired substantial quantities of Ethiopian equipment, including [M-60] tanks and ammunition" (Legum et al, 1979:33). Then, in October 1977, the Somali forces successfully breached the strategic Marda (also known as Karamara) Pass, which was the gateway to the rugged and dry Amhar Mountains running east-west and forming the strongest defensive barrier to the flat Ogaden, thus forcing the Ethiopian forces to fall back on Dire Dawa and Harar, which was the Ogaden area's Ethiopian military command center.

5.2.3. The Final Ethiopian Successes

By the end of October 1977, the Somali forces were "essentially stalemated at various points along the road to Harar" (Gilkes, 1994:725). After weeks of being bogged down by bad weather, in January 1978, the Somali forces eventually mounted an attack, but having "neither the supplies nor the manpower to take the city…[they] were forced to regroup on the outskirts in anticipation of an Ethiopian counterattack" (Nelson, 1981:246). This long-awaited counter-offensive, which would score major successes in a short period of time (five weeks), was launched in early February 1978, and involved around 40,000 regular Ethiopian troops (augmented by 80,000 troops of the People's Militia, and reinforced by thousands of Cuban troops).

The Ethiopian counter-offensive "consisted largely of slow advances along the entire front, employing artillery barrages and massed columns of armor" (Porter, 1984:202). In addition, in a

carefully engineered maneuver, Ethio-Cuban forces crossed the Amhar Mountains "bypassing Somali troops dug in around the Marda Pass" (ibid); Soviet Mi-6 helicopters airlifted pairs of tanks from Dire Dawa around the Amhar Mountains to Jijiga (Legum et al, 1979:35). This surprise attack on their rear, which was combined with a strenuous frontal assault from Harar, severely mauled the Somali positions; in fact, Jijiga was recaptured on March 5 (1978) after two days of fierce fighting "in which four Somali brigades were cut to pieces and 3,000 troops were killed" (Nelson, 1981:246). After the fall of Jijiga, the Ethiopian forces swept through the parched Ogaden desert to recover the Ogaden's major towns. The Ethiopian triumph was assured when "on March 9 Siad Bare announced that his troops had been recalled from Ethiopian territory" (Nelson, 1981:246).

The principal factors which accounted for the Ethiopian successes were the following (not arranged in order of importance):

1. Ethiopia's decisive air superiority: despite the loss of the important ground control radar at Jijiga, the numerically inferior Ethiopian Air Force had established, as early as September-October 1977, complete air superiority in engagements against the Somali Air Force which was plagued by a dearth of spare parts. The Ethiopian F-5s and the newly acquired Soviet Migs struck against Somali tank units, destroyed during the 8-month war no less than 23 Somali aircraft, and significantly disrupted Somali supply lines.

2. sentiments of nationalism (which ran deep in the Ethiopian national character): the fact that Somali forces dangerously approached Ethiopia's heartland facilitated mass mobilization – recruitment of regular soldiers and conscription of a huge People's Militia.

3. massive Soviet weapons' transfer: the Soviet Union organized one of the largest long-distance military support operations in recent military history (Legum et al, 1979:34), in which sophisticated weapons arrived in quantity in Ethiopia after November 1977 (See Appendix 5).

4. better strategic command: the strategic command of the Ethiopian counter-offensive was taken over by Soviet officers, including General Vassily Petrov who was First Deputy Commander in Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces and General Grigory Barisov whose involvement was crucial because "he was in charge of the Soviet military aid program prior to the [November 1977] expulsion and thus had intimate knowledge of the Somali Armed Forces" (Porter, 1984:204).

5. Somali supply problems: the Somali supply lines were overextended, and, after the cessation of weapons' deliveries by the Soviet Union (and fuel shipments), a shortage of weapons reduced Somali forces' fighting capacity. "By November, the Somali army was largely out of supplies and spare parts" (Gilkes, 1994:726).

6. increased Ethiopian morale: by October 1977, the bulk of the Ethiopian forces in the Ogaden was resigned to defeat because of an inadequate supply of weapons and food, and the lack of coordination (in a situation where there were multiple centers of authority). After a few months, the Ethiopian lines of supply began to be maintained constantly, and Mengistu effectively took personal responsibility for operations (frequently visiting the frontlines), with the result that morale rose considerably.

7. improvement in field command: initially, the Ethiopian forces demonstrated weaknesses in command; commanders in the field reacted slowly to battlefield situations, and were reticent to take initiative. Improvements were made, as the execution of the Ethiopian counter-

offensive's complex planning ascertained a high level of military competence (Gilkes, 1994:144).

8. the contribution of Cuban forces: Cuban troops, used in a specialized advisory capacity as well as deployed in frontline combat missions, strengthened the Ethiopian military thrust.

5.3. The 1982 Compellence of Somalia

5.3.1. Ethiopian Concerns

In mid-1982, four years after the conclusion of the Ogaden War, the Ethiopian regime watched suspiciously the fluid situation in the Ogaden take a dangerous turn once again. That Siad Bare's regime would risk another round seemed a likely scenario as the ingredients for an attack were all there. In June 1982, the WSLF stepped up its hit-and-run operations. Somali army elements reportedly once more fighting alongside it, the WSLF struck at targets deep in Ethiopian territory. For instance, it attacked "an Ethiopian army unit stationed outside Shilabo, a town some 100 km inside Ethiopia" (Korn, 1986:76). Simultaneously, the Somali regime was assiduously cultivating ties with the Persian Gulf states in order to drum up their pressure on the US to deliver weapons to its battered army. As a result of this pressure, the US increased its overt and covert military assistance to Somalia; "two airlifts of American military supplies (as well as presumably shipments) appear to have consisted of armored personnel carriers fitted with anti-tank weapons, M-16 rifles, radar (not apparently linked to any anti-aircraft weapons), field radios, jeeps, trucks and possibly some 106 mm RCL guns" (Somalia, 1982:1). The assistance was also in exchange of Somali military cooperation; the US was allowed the use of the strategic

port of Berbera as a staging post for the US Rapid Deployment Force, which was contrived to intervene in the politically volatile and economically crucial oil-rich Persian Gulf.

5.3.2. Ethiopian Objective and Operation

Thus, keeping an eye on the specter of resurgent Somali revanchism, the Ethiopian regime staged a two-dimensional operation, which had a carefully limited objective – warning the Somali regime that unless the military activities directed against Ethiopia in the Ogaden were brought to an end, it would not hesitate to take such action as may be consistent with Ethiopia's national security requirements (rather than the conquest of Somali territory). The operation began in July 1982 with Ethiopian troops estimated to number 20,000 crossing the Ethio-Somali border along with SSDF elements, which were used in infantry and reconnaissance capacity (ibid). The 8th Mechanized Infantry Division "spearheaded the attack which also included battalions from the 69th and 94th Brigades, and the 20th and 11th Divisions. The infantry was supported by 30 to 45 T-54 and T-55 tanks; artillery battalions with D-30 122 mm high velocity heavy howitzers; 120 mm mortar batteries each with eight pieces; 'Katusha' mobile BM-21 rocket-launcher batteries; a reconnaissance group and other support units" (MoFA, 1983:7). These forces captured the village of Balenbale "crushing the Somali army unit in garrison there; its survivors fled in panic. Throughout July and into the first half of August, the Ethiopians and their Somali dissident allies launched repeated forays across the Somali border…in August the Ethiopians and the SSDF took the village of Goldogob, north of Galcaio [the capital city of Mudug region]" (Korn, 1986:76). Parallely, Ethiopian aircraft bombed several Somali villages and towns, including Galcaio, killing an unconfirmed number of people.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis adequately showed that the post-1974 regime had embraced a strategy of maintaining large Armed Forces buttressed by the acquisition of sophisticated weapons in order to safeguard Ethiopia's national security against evident threats, which were of both military and political nature. It also plainly indicated that the constructive role of the Armed Forces was compromised because of particular handicaps, some of which deserve recalling:

1. unintelligent policy decisions and mismanagement by an inadequate political leadership, which alienated the Armed Forces' key elements;

2. excessive political control, overlapping commands, wholesale purges of the Armed Forces' ablest officers and selective appointments, which created complacency;

3. the prolongness of the northern war, which crucially undermined morale;

4. and, excessive dependence on the Soviet Union the sole purpose of which was to ensure the general allegiance of Ethiopia.

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Appendix 1: The Triangular Command

	Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces			Minister of Internal Affairs
	Minister of Defense			Military Security Main Department
Head of the Political Commissariat	Political Officer	Military Commander	Security Officer	

The Triangular Command

Different Units of the Armed Forces
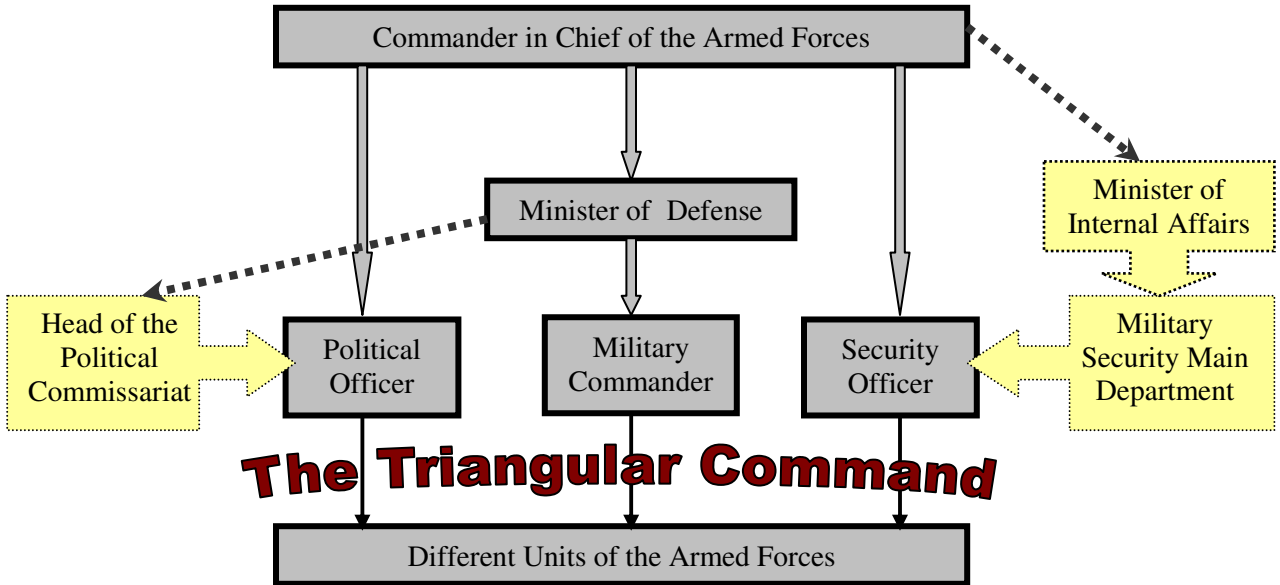
Source: Reproduced (with some modifications from Mulatu Wondirad, "Crisis of [the] Ethiopian Army," BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University (1992:76).

Appendix 2: Tentative Organizational Structure of the Ethiopian Armed Forces (1989)

INSPECTOR GENERAL	COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES	NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL

DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND HEAD OF POLITICAL COMMISSARIAT	MINISTER OF DEFENSE	COMMISION FOR DEFENSE INDUSTRY

CHIEF OF STAFF

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT	MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT

COMMANDER OF THE GROUND FORCE	COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE	COMMANDER OF THE NAVY
FUNCTIONAL COMMANDS: OPERATIONS, INTELLIGENCE, ADMINISTRATION, LOGISTICS	FUNCTIONAL COMMANDS: OPERATIONS, INTELLIGENCE, ADMINISTRATION, LOGISTICS	FUNCTIONAL COMMANDS: OPERATIONS, INTELLIGENCE, ADMINISTRATION, LOGISTICS
OPERATIONAL COMMANDS: 4 REVOLUTIONARY ARMIES	OPERATIONAL COMMANDS: 6 AERIAL REGIMENTS	2 NAVAL COMMANDS: NORTHERN, SOUTHERN

Research and design by Berouk Mesfin; graphic by Rahel Mesfin.

Appendix 3: Organizational Chart of the Military Intelligence Department
(1989)

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                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │  CHIEF OF STAFF │
                          └────────┬────────┘
                                   │
                     ┌─────────────────────────┐
                     │   HEAD OF MILITARY      │
                     │     INTELLIGENCE        │
                     │     DEPARTMENT          │
                     └────────────┬────────────┘
                                  │
   ┌──────────────┬───────────────┼───────────────┬──────────────┐
   │              │               │               │              │
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
│ COMBAT   │ │ MILITARY │   │ COVERT   │    │ RESEARCH │
│INTELLIG. │ │ MAPPING  │   │OPERATIONS│    │AND ANALYS│
│DIRECTOR. │ │DIRECTOR. │   │DIRECTOR. │    │DIRECTOR. │
└──────────┘ └──────────┘   └──────────┘    └──────────┘
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COMBAT INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE	**MILITARY MAPPING DIRECTORATE**	**COVERT OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE**	**RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS DIRECTORATE**	
FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE	**DISSEMINATION DIRECTORATE**	**ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT DIRECTORATE**		

Design and graphic by Berouk Mesfin.

Appendix 4: The Ethio-Somali Military Balance Prior to the Ogaden War

	Ethiopia	Somalia
Personnel Strength (Regular)		
Ground Force	50,000	30,000
Air Force	2,000	1,000
Naval Force	1,500	500
Major Military Equipment		
Tanks	78	300
Armored Vehicles	146	350
Artillery	112	200
Combat Aircraft	27[*]	52

Sources: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1977-1978*. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1977; Colin Legum et al, *The Horn of Africa in Continuing Crisis*. New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1979; Tom Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa: The Widening Storm*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1979.

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[*] The number is actually 35 because the US furnished 8 F-5E combat aircraft in 1976.

Appendix 5: Soviet Weapons Air- and Sea-Lift During the Ogaden War
(November 1977-January 1978)

Types of Weapons	Amount Sent
T-34 tanks	A few
T-54/-55 tanks	400-500
T-62 tanks	Some
Armored personnel carriers (incl. BTR-152 APCs and BMP-1 AFVs)	300
Mig-17 combat aircraft	Some
Mig-21 combat aircraft	50-60
Mig-23 combat aircraft	20
Mi-8 helicopters	25
SA-7 surface-to-air missiles	Several hundreds
Sagger anti-tank missiles	Thousands
BM-21 122 mm rocket launchers	30-35
Artillery guns, 100 mm to 152 mm	Over 300
Mortars	Substantial
Light weapons	Thousands

Source: Adapted from Robert Patman, *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Appendix 6: CIA Staff Working in, and on, Ethiopia in the Immediate
Post-1974 Period (Including the Chain of Command)

1. Members of the Interagency Ethiopia Working Group (CIA Directorate of Operations)
   Samuel Martin (1979-?)
   Frederick Wettering (1979-?)

2. Head of Africa Division
   James Potts (1974-?)

3. Head of Horn and Central Branch
   -

4. Chief of Ethiopia/Somalia Section
   Brenda McElhinney (1977-?)

5. CIA Chief of Station in Ethiopia
   Eugene Jeffers (1974-76)
   Bertram Dunn (1976-1978)

6. CIA Deputy Chief of Station in Ethiopia
   Matthew Monczewski (1973-79?)

7. Economic and Commercial Officer (the Standard Cover Position for CIA Operatives)
   Richard Smith (1975-77)
   Harry Wetherbee (1977-?)

8. CIA Telecommunications Personnel in Ethiopia
   Larry Austin (1976-79)
   Roy Bigler (1975-77)
   Frederick Davis (1979-?)
   Donivan Lichty (1979-?)
   Felix Malakoski (1975-77)
   Denis Pulser (1979-?)
   Mark Slabaugh (1977-?)
   Michael Smith (1975-77)
   John Wilson (1977-?)

9. Secretary to the CIA Chief of Station in Ethiopia
   Judith Chisholm (1975-78)
   Julia Landereth (1978-?)

Sources: Ellen Ray et al (eds), *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa*. London: Zed Press, 1980;
John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1978.

Appendix 7: Ethiopia's Military Expenditure (1974-1989)

Year	Military Expenditure (in Millions of Birr)	Total Expenditure (in Millions of Birr)
1974-1975	184	1,048
1975-1976	315	1,200
1976-1977	383	1,344
1977-1978	703	1,696
1978-1979	627	1,846
1979-1980	695	2,137
1980-1981	727	2,296
1981-1982	835	2,649
1982-1983	1,062	3,807
1983-1984	939	3,198
1984-1985	926	3,924
1985-1986	929	4,131
1986-1987	922	3,825
1988-1989	1,500	-

Source: Partially Reproduced from Eshetu Chole, "The Impact of War on the Ethiopian Economy." In *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Horn of Africa*. New York: New School for Social Research, 1989.

Declaration

The thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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