

**A M E M B A S S Y N A I R O B I**  
**TELEGRAM**

9681  
 RECD:  
 APR 27 1976

ACTION	
PO	
INFO	
AMB	✓
DCM	✓
CHARGE	
ADMIN	✓
POL	
ECON	
CONS	
POL II	✓
SSO	
SSO/TV	
PER	
RCO	
RSO	
RMO	
RBFO	
FAS	
VRU	
AID	
JSIS	✓
PC	
VCOIC	
LOC	
C & R	
6	
CHRON	

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DE RUTABA 4993/1 1181108  
 ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
 R 271008Z APR 76  
 FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9152  
 INFO RUTABA/AMCONSUL ASMARA 7298  
 RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 692  
 RUGMKN/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 2585  
 RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 937  
 RUGMDI/AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO 4304  
 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 336  
 RUGNI/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 8248  
 RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2979  
 RUMJPG/USLO PEKING 071  
 BT

**ACTION COPY**  
**ACTION TAKEN** \_\_\_\_\_  
**REPLY SENT** \_\_\_\_\_

*Handwritten:* Ethiopia

C ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ L ADDIS ABABA 4993  
 E.O. 11652: GDS  
 TAGS: PFOR PINT  
 SUBJECT: THE SETTING FOR ETHIOPIA'S LEFTWARD LURCH

1. EMBASSY WILL BE ATTEMPTING IN OTHER MESSAGES TO MAKE SENSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA IN PAST FEW WEEKS, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY. THIS MESSAGE TRIES TO OUTLINE, IN OVER-SIMPLIFIED TERMS, SOME OF THE MAJOR BACKGROUND ELEMENTS AGAINST WHICH FUTURE REPORTING CAN BE VIEWED.
2. THE REVOLUTION THAT BEGAN OVER TWO YEARS AGO HAS PRODUCED A NUMBER OF DESIRABLE CHANGES -- LAND REFORM; BETTER USE OF TRAINED MANPOWER; REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME IN FAVOR OF LOW INCOME GROUPS; ATTEMPTS TO EXTEND GOVT SERVICES MORE WIDELY, ESPECIALLY TO THE RURAL AREAS; THE BEGINNINGS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE FORM OF PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS AND URBAN ORGANIZATIONS, ETC. HIGH COFFEE PRICES, A GOOD GRAIN HARVEST, AND COMPETENT MANAGEMENT OF NATIONALIZED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES HAVE MINIMIZED ECONOMIC STRESSES. ALTHOUGH RISING PRICES HAVE REDUCED THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS THAT POORER PEOPLE MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE EXPERIENCED, THIS GOVT HAS NEVERTHELESS IMPROVED THEIR MATERIAL WELFARE, IN SOME CASES TO A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE.
3. THE ABSENCE OF STRONG, CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, HAS HAD THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF WEAKENING THE WHOLE FABRIC OF SOCIETY, CAUSING INCREASING DISSENSIONS AND UNDERMINING UNITY AND MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. RULING JUNTA (DIRG), ORIGINALLY 120 MEMBERS ELECTED BY MILITARY UNITS, FINDS ITSELF UNABLE TO AGREE ON NEXT STEPS, EXCEPT FOR VAGUE EGALITARIAN "SOCIALIST" GOALS. DIRG TIES WITH, AND RESPONSIVENESS TO, PARENT UNITS ARE INCREASINGLY STRAINED, TO POINT WHERE MOST DIRG MEMBERS DO NOT DARE TO RETURN TO UNITS. A SERIOUS SELF-EXAMINATION WITHIN DIRG WAS SPARKED LAST OCTOBER BY ENLISTED MEN (WHO FORM MAJORITY OF DIRG) ATTACKING DIRG LEADERS FOR FAILING TO ACHIEVE POPULAR SUPPORT. OTHERS CONTEND THAT THE PROBLEM WAS MORE TRIBAL-BASED WITH MAJ. MENGISTU AND HIS GALLA IDEOLOGUES JOCKEYING FOR POWER AGAINST LTCOL ATNAFU AND HIS AMHARA/TIGRE FACTION. THAT DISCUSSION DID NOT PRODUCE ANY CONSENSUS ON WHAT TO DO, BRINGING INSTEAD INCREASED DISARRAY

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IN DIRG AND A SENSE OF HELPLESSNESS THAT HAS ENABLED FIRST V/CHAIRMAN MENGISTU TO EMERGE AS PRIMUS INTER PARES AND TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST PASSIVE DIRG ACQUIESCENCE IN PRESENT INNOVATIONS. HIS NEW MOVES SEEM GROUPED UNDER TWO CATEGORIES:

A. TO HSARE POWER WITH LEFTIST INTELLECTUALS, IN A BID FOR THE SUPPORT OF STUDENTS AND, TRADE UNIONISTS, AND ALSO THROUGH A SHARP MEDIA TILT TOWARD SOVS, EAST EUROPEANS, AND CHINESE TO TRY FOR THEIR SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY SOV RESTRAINT ON SOMALIS.

B. TO FOSTER UNIFIED POPULAR SENTIMENTS AND TO PLACATE MILITARY DISCONTENTS OVER ERITREAN WAR BY FANNING HISTORICAL FEAR OF ARAB/MOSLEM PRESSURES, AND ATTEMPTING TO RAISE LARGELY ANHARA AND SOME CO-OPTED GALLAS IN A "PEOPLES ARMY" TO GO TO ERITREA TO DISPLACE AND/OR EXTERMINATE ERITREANS, THUS ACHIEVING "FINAL SOLUTION" OF PROBLEM.

4. BOTH MOVES APPEAR MORE DEMAGOGIC THAN RATIONAL AND NEITHER SEEMS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THE INTENDED RESULTS. HOWEVER, BOTH ARE STILL IN PROCESS OF UNFOLDING, AND DETAILED ASSESSMENTS MUST AWAIT MORE FACTS.

5. WHAT CONCERNS US NOW IS THE VISIBLE SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DISARRAY IN ETHIOPIA WHERE THESE DISPARATE MOVES BY A SMALL CLIQUE COULD HAVE DISASTROUS RESULTS. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN REVOLUTIONS IN OTHER TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES, THIS ONE IS NOW (TEMPORARILY WE HOPE) IN THE HANDS OF A FEW HUNDRED LEFTIST PFEOLOGUES WHO SEEM BENT ON DESTROYING FIRST AND BUILDING LATER. THEY ARE TRYING BY "MASS ACTION", MOSTLY IN THE LARGE TOWNS, TO ACHIEVE ALMOST OVERNIGHT THE "SOCIALIST MODERNIZATION" OF A HIGHLY TRADITIONAL, RURAL-BASED SOCIETY THAT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THEM, AND THAT THEY DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND OR VALUE. A YEAR AND A HALF AGO THE DIRG PROBABLY INTENDED TO EMBARK ON A PERIOD OF SOCIALIST POLITICAL TUTELAGE THAT WOULD LEAD TO A CONSENSUS ON APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARD SOCIALIST GOALS. HAVING FAILED THROUGH DISSENSION AND INEPTITUDE, THE DIRG NOW ALLOWS THE MOST VOCAL URBAN ELEMENTS TO SEEK QUICK AND RADICAL SOLUTIONS TO ETHIOPIA'S COMPLICATED PROBLEMS. THE GENUINE IDEALISTIC GOAL OF BETTERING THE LIFE OF THE POORER PEOPLE STILL REMAINS, BUT THE MEANS NOW BEING CHOSEN ARE NOT LIKELY TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL.

6. BOTH THE PROBLEMS AND THE ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS ARE CAUSING SIGNIFICANT SCHISMS AND TENSIONS.

A. THERE ARE SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY ITSELF, WHERE THE REVOLUTION HAS BEEN FROM THE BOTTOM RATHER THAN THE TOP, DISCIPLINE IS INCREASINGLY POOR, A LARGE NUMBER OF OFFICERS HAVE BEEN RETIRED, AND UNEDUCATED ENLISTED GROUPS OFTEN MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ON WHETHER TO OBEY ORDERS. POLITICS IS LESS A FACTOR THAN PRACTICAL GRIEVANCES (INCLUDING COMBAT IN ERITREA), BUT THE RESULT IS THAT ARMY UNITY CONTINUES TO ERODE.

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B. POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS TENSIONS BETWEEN AMHARAS AND GALLAS HAVE INTENSIFIED, WITHIN THE MILITARY, IN GOVT, AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

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S ARE SAYING, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF GALLAS IN HIGH PLACES INCLUDING AMONG THE LEADING LEFTIST IDEOLOGUES, THAT TOO MANY GALLAS ARE BEING SELECTED FOR CHOICE JOBS THROUGH FAVORITISM, THAT THIS IS THE GALLAS WHO HAVE BEEN CHIEF BENEFICIARIES OF LAND REFORM THROUGH OUSTING OF AMHARA LANDLORDS IN THE SOUTH, AND THAT GALLAS ARE NOW TRYING TO EXPLOIT AMHARA/TIGRE CONFLICT IN ERITREA TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR ASCENDANCY. THE ARGUMENT IS MADE THAT PREVIOUS GRADUAL APPROACH TO REVOLUTION BENEFITTED THE AMHARA-CENTERED COALITION, WHILE PRESENT RADICAL LINES (LED BY GALLAS INCLUDING MENGISTU AND THE IDEOLOGUES) WOULD PROMOTE GALLA ASCENDANCY. THESE TRIBAL

MANTAGONISMS ARE REFLECTED IN UNDERGROUND LEFTIST GROUPS -- "VOICE OF THE MASSES" BEING WIDELY PERCEIVED AS GALLA, AND EPRP/DEMOCRACIA AS AMHARA-TIGRE. IN REALITY, NEITHER GALLAS NOR AMHARAS ARE AT ALL UNIFIED BEHIND ANY IDEOLOGY, BUT THE ABOVE TRIBALIST PERCEPTIONS COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OBJECTIVE FACTS.

C. THE BUREAUCRACY, THE CHIEF RESERVOIR OF MANAGEMENT TALENT AND EDUCATION -- INITIALLY WELL-DISPOSED TOWARD THE REVOLUTION -- INCREASINGLY FINDS ITSELF THE TARGET OF LEFTIST VITUPERATION, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION, AND FEELS THREATENED BY THE GOVT. MOST MEMBERS OF THIS ESSENTIAL CLASS HAVE ALREADY LOST HEAVILY THROUGH NATIONALIZATIONS OF LAND AND HOUSING.

D. THE "PROGRESSIVE" ELEMENTS -- TEACHERS, STUDENTS, TRADE UNIONISTS -- HAVE UTTERLY FAILED TO COALESCE AROUND ANY CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM, BEING UNITED ONLY IN THEIR DESIRE TO SEE THE CURRENT DIRG LEADERSHIP OUSTED, A WISH THEY EXPRESS BY DEMANDS FOR FREE SPEECH AND A CIVILIAN GOVT. PAROCHIAL DEMANDS CUT ACROSS IDEOLOGIES: THE TRADE UNIONISTS, ALREADY MUCH BETTER OFF THAN MOST OF THE POPULATION, WANT MORE MONEY AND SHORTER HOURS; MANY STUDENTS WANT AUTOMATIC PASSES WITHOUT EXAMINATIONS. MANY OLDER STUDENTS IN THE ZEMACHA PROGRAM, ABETTED BY INTELLECTUALS, WANT SIMPLISTIC AND EXTREME MEASURES INCLUDING GENUINE CLASS WARFARE AND THE LIQUIDATION OF REACTIONARIES. THE "FREE SPEECH" COLUMNS OF NEWSPAPERS IN RECENT WEEKS, AND THE ABORTIVE DAY OF FREE DEMONSTRATIONS APRIL 22, PRODUCED MORE DISUNITY THAN EVER, WITH RADICAL FACTIONS ATTACKING OTHER RADICALS, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY V/CHAIRMAN MENGISTU.

7. WE VENTURE NO PREDICTIONS AT THIS TIME. MODERATES EVERYWHERE -- IN THE MILITARY, IN GOVT, IN THE COUNTRYSIDE -- SEEM PARALYZED. WE FEEL INSTINCTIVELY THAT THE MORE TRADITIONAL AND RATIONAL FORCES IN THIS SOCIETY, WHICH AFTER ALL HAVE VERY

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DEEP ROOTS, WILL EVENTUALLY EXERT A BRAKING EFFECT ON THE SMALL URBAN GROUP OF SELF-APPOINTED RADICAL LEADERS. WHEN AND IF THIS COMES ABOUT, THE MEANS OF ITS COMING COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE FACT; A CONSERVATIVE COUP BY A SEGMENT OF THE MILITARY COULD TRIGGER AN INTRA-ARMY CIVIL WAR THAT THE DISARRAY WITHIN THE MILITARY WOULD EXACERBATE. OR, THE EXCESSES OF ITA RADICALS COULD SERVE TO UNIFY THE MILITARY AND THE BUREAUCRACY BEHIND MORE MODERATE POLICIES. HOWEVER, A LOSS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE, NEVER VERY HIGH IN THIS SOCIETY, AND THE LACK OF THE STRONG LEADERSHIP TO WHICH THE COUNTRY IS ACCUSTOMED, DO NOT GIVE CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM. WE REMIND OURSELVES THAT EPMG RHETORIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE ALARMING THAN ITS ACTIONSJ  
BUT IN THE INCREASE  
IN STRESSES ON THE SOCIETY WE SEE SUBSTANTIAL DANGERS.

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